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# PRESBYTERIAN Record

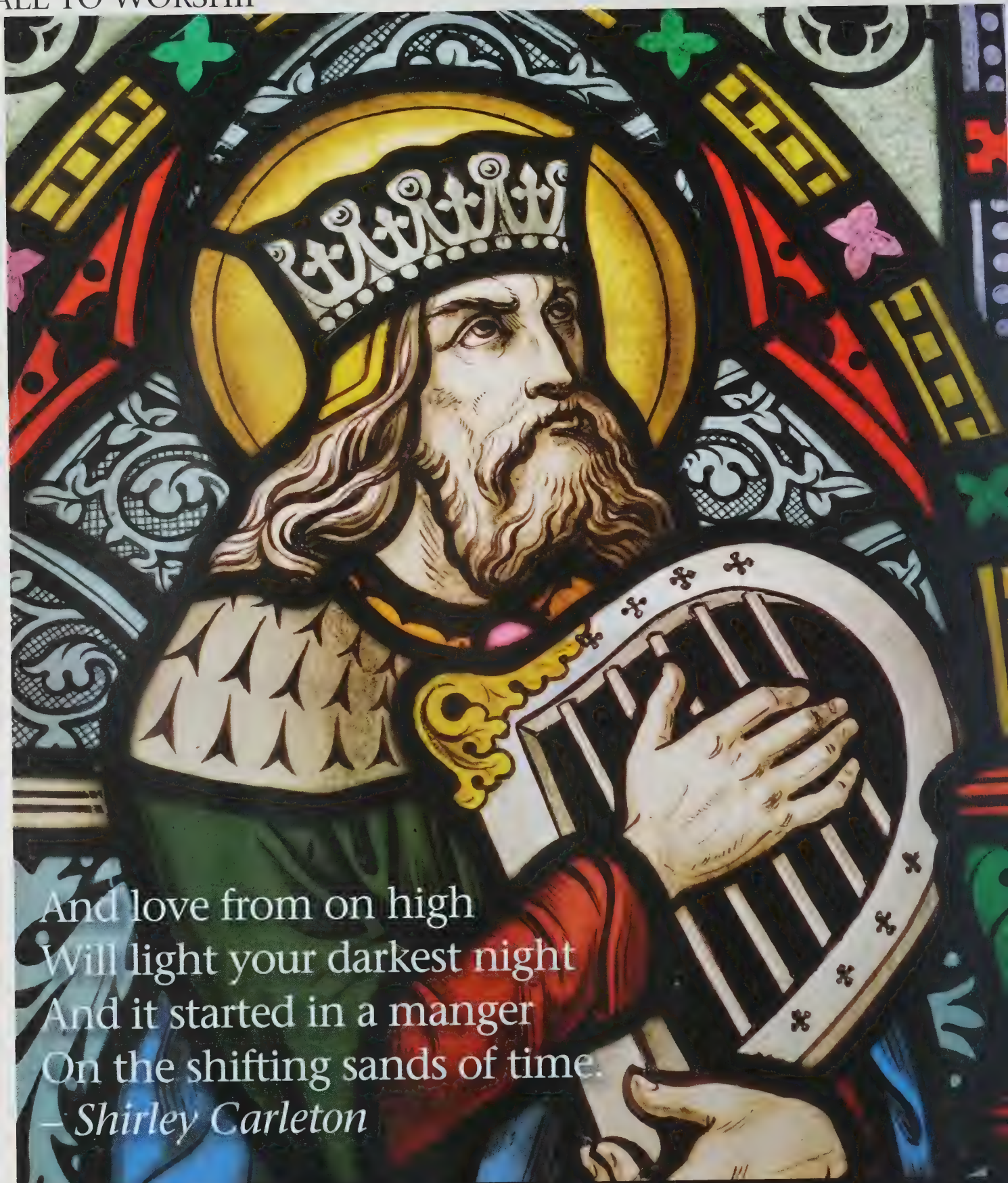
January 2008

I am not a member of the religious right. I am not a fundamentalist. I am an evangelical. Some of us are very careful about the definition of those terms. If you can only work with people you agree with, then you have ruled out the entire world because no one agrees with you perfectly.

If you want to make a difference you have to work with people you disagree with on different issues, but you can disagree without being disagreeable."

A feature  
interview with  
Rick Warren





And love from on high  
Will light your darkest night  
And it started in a manger  
On the shifting sands of time.  
— Shirley Carleton

Christmas Carols, new ones and some classics, written and/or performed by *Record* readers can be heard on [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca).  
Thank you to all who participated. And, you're invited to start thinking about doing it again later this year.



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## Rick Warren

A heart for the poor.

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# BELIEF GROWS IN COMMUNITY

Christians need to build relationships. BY DAVID HARRIS

At one point, as we were working on the cover of this issue, we had a photograph of some worshippers with the title *The New Evangelicals*, referring to a new thrust of evangelicalism in the United States on social issues, particularly poverty.

We changed this for a variety of reasons, in part because we realized many evangelicals would say that concern for social issues has always been a part of their tradition.

Canadian evangelicals might also argue that although they have concerns about morality—also echoed in the Roman Catholic Church—they have been less preoccupied with these than their American counterparts for whom certain moral issues, notably abortion and homosexual rights, have been a prime political focus in the past two decades.

But whatever one's interpretation of scripturally based moral living is, no one in today's free-thinking society is likely to be converted simply by running into or being run over by dogma. Our children don't learn right from wrong in a book, they learn it from the people around them, whether from family or their friends. They learn in community. The question is, which community?

I was recently asked to participate in a questionnaire by a Christian newspaper that wanted to know what I thought were the most important issues facing the church today. To me, the answer is plain: it's about building relationships.

It's a frequently noted observation that Canadians are most friendly with their neighbours in the winter when we are all out shovelling snow. I grew up doing that. And it's a start. But relationships need to be deeper than the shovel in the snowpile.

In a country as wealthy as Canada, we are fortunate that we have an almost fully employed society. But millions of us are in dual-income relationships with children. Urban transit is far behind the rapid development of our cities and one or both parents join the lemming rush every day.

Children need to be dropped off and picked up from school or daycare. Then there is music, ballet, soccer, hockey—did anyone pick up the groceries for supper? Supper? Who's home to make it? You're working late? OK, I'll make supper and put the children to bed. Your supper will be in the



fridge when you get home at when, 9? I'll be at the computer.

And so the exhausting merry-go-round spins. Sunday rolls around. Will it be a morning of family time, perhaps at the cottage or on the ski-slopes? Or maybe just lolling around with a latté and *The New York Times* while the children play with Lego? Or church?

If church is in a dark building with tired hymns and a we-hope-heaven-knows-what-

reality-this-is-about-because-we-don't sermon, the answer is easy. It's even easier if the people judge your busy lifestyle with simplistic ideals based on a 1950s concept of family or don't even speak to you. Who wants that?

Which is perhaps where the "new evangelicals" have a lot to teach all Christians. The best of them, as typified by the notables in the U.S. such as Rick Warren or Bill Hybels, have built their church communities by fostering relationships. Small groups of a dozen or so people are the essential building blocks of the megachurches just as cells build a human body or bricks a house.

Welcoming communities will always be successful. Because creating community is the one thing we all crave. It's lonely being just another lemming. And although we all know—or desperately hope—there is more to life, it's not easy to find. Yet poll after poll proves that there is a keen interest in things spiritual. It's organized religion, a.k.a. congregations, that get in the way.

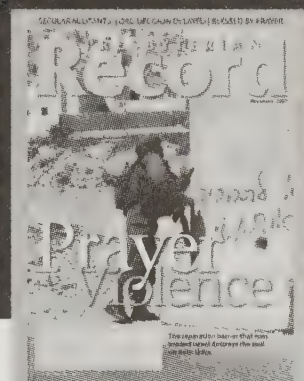
Rev. Chuck Congram built an amazingly successful congregation on the shores of Lake Erie near Windsor. In this issue, he offers some salient observations on how churches need to change to share the Good News. His first point is "a commitment on the part of Christians to build meaningful relationships with those who are not believers."

I might take it one step back and suggest that churchgoing Christians just need to build meaningful relationships—with anyone. Belief grows in community. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name..." ■

David Harris

# Letters

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## PRESBYTERIAN Record

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## PWS&D = Good Samaritan

*Re A bit annoyed, Letters, November 2007*

Presbyterian World Service & Development's mandate is provided by General Assembly to undertake development activities, disaster relief and educate congregations about world-wide needs. In a world with too much poverty, injustice and oppression, it is our mission to serve people according to their need and without discrimination.

Last year was marked by excessive flooding and two of the hardest hit nations were Pakistan and China. The flooding that took place in Asia was called "the worst in living memory" by the United Nations. In Pakistan and India it affected an unbelievable 45 million people. In southwestern China, extensive flooding of the southern Yangtze River affected more than 54 million people. Rainfall in certain areas exceeded records dating back over 100 years. PWS&D responded by supporting local partners to provide food packages, relief kits, tarpaulin sheets, access to clean water and other essential items for those affected.

Canadian Presbyterians contribute generously to support relief and development efforts through PWS&D. These funds are used for development and relief efforts to support people to live life with dignity and hope despite injustice, poverty, disaster and conflict. We do not undertake this mission alone. Through Action by Churches Together, the global church community supports relief efforts totalling \$100 million. Our membership and programming through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and support from the Canadian

International Development Agency allows us to work ecumenically to alleviate hunger and poverty. As Christians through word and deed we humbly follow in the footsteps of Christ.

How nations allocate resources is an important question to ask and unfortunately not one that citizens in all countries can decide. On behalf of Presbyterians, PWS&D will be at the forefront of responding to the needs of people who are suffering, regardless of the political system or regime they are living under.

KENNETH KIM, DIRECTOR, PWS&D, TORONTO

Perhaps the letter writer should read Luke 10: 25-37. Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan. When he was set upon by robbers and left to die, this man was ignored by his own people, but the Samaritan looked after him. We were told to "go and do likewise." If we ignore the needy people in China and Pakistan, we are like the priest and levite. I feel that, as Christians, we should be prepared to serve anyone in the world who needs our help.

PHYLLIS DAVIS, BEAVERTON, ONT

## Emerging Hope

*Re A Call For Peace in Afghanistan,  
October News*

The Taliban do not want peace; they want a complete capitulation of the present government and the allies who are trying to help establish a peaceful, democratic society in that war-torn country. Then, when they take over again, they can continue to destroy icons of other religions, force women doctors to stay home and become totally dependent upon their spouses,

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## Pontius' Puddle



fathers and brothers for their well-being, etc. If you want a terrific perspective on how horrible the Taliban are, you should read *My Forbidden Face, Growing Up Under the Taliban: A Young Woman's Story* by a then 18-year old refugee known as Latifa.

*Living Faith* deals with a Just War. I believe that our brave men and women of Canada's Armed forces are doing just that over there. Please do not insult their efforts by proclaiming that we must seek accommodations with a terrible, ruthless group such as the Taliban!

J. BEVERLY EWEN, AJAX, ONT.

I was deeply angered at the quick concurrence by the Presbyterian Church in the predictable and myopic stance of the Canadian Council of Churches on our nation's role in Afghanistan. If there will be opportunities for involvement in "public conversations" by individual churches, one wishes that the moderator might have waited before signing the letter to the Prime Minister. Too many of our decent countrymen and women have died in just causes to so easily negotiate their memory with the latest evil to confront us. That said, after reading on subsequent pages the sober reflection and informed reportage by Andrew Faiz (Afghanistan's Dusty Hope, October) on Afghan realities, I finished reading an excellent issue with an emerging hope. In a time for war, there can also

be a time for peace.

MICHAEL MOORHOUSE, CALGARY

I would like to express my appreciation to Andrew Faiz on his informative yet optimistic article. We are so accustomed to seeing negative items on television or in newspapers on the situation in war-torn countries, that it is refreshing to realize that all is not in vain and that this is where God wants us as a country to be. It is also gratifying to have our church and individuals involved in such situations. Those families who have lost loved ones in such conflicts need to read more about the people and cultures our men and women are trying to help. We also need to hear more about the involvement of our church in following Christ's teachings in such scripture as Matthew 25: 35-36. Thank you for being there.

DICK ROE, CHATHAM, ONT.

### Fitting remembrance

The 90th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge is indeed a fitting time to remember that along with patriotism and courage there was faith on the battlefield. It is ironic that the battle came a day after Easter; but the greater irony lies in the fact that Easter was celebrated on both sides of the Ridge. I cannot forget a visit to a large Lutheran church in Frankfurt where half the large west wall was covered with a plaque honouring those who died for Gott und Vaterland in 1914-18. The

suffering was shared at Vimy with the greater loss of 20,000 casualties falling to the Germans. Sir Philip Gibbs, the British war reporter, noted almost in passing that "the enemy losses were frightful, and the scenes behind his lines must have been and still (are) hideous in slaughter and terror ... It is a black day for the German armies and for the German women who do not yet know what it means to them."

JAMES FARRIS, CHARLOTTETOWN

### Grave Sins

*Re A Grave Sin, November*

Your editorial was correct and to the point. I have seen Mr Nieuwhof's actions for many years, from attending St. Andrew's in Oro Station, through the amalgamation with Guthrie and Central, serving on two search committees, the Trinity Building Committee, both capital fund raising campaigns and heading the Tech Team ministry while we worshipped at Guthrie Public School. I was one who left Trinity not long after the doors opened. I got tired of the same lectures on money and the loud music that included worship songs such as If I Had A Million Dollars and (I Can't Get No) Satisfaction. What they had to do with worshipping the Lord I just didn't get.

Our first two services after Mr. Nieuwhof and his followers left have averaged around 175 in worship plus those in kid's ministry. We have had more than 50 volunteers come out to

work in the five groups that the interim moderators and assessor elders have set up. We have a preliminary budget for 2008 that we should meet and have paid down the outstanding mortgage to just over \$236,000.

There are people lined up into 2008 to lead worship. The Barrie Presbytery has put out a call to fill the vacancy at Trinity. The congregation at Trinity is alive and well, and is serving God, reaching out to the community where He called us to spread His word and tend to His flock. God is blessing us. We have no fear of being dissolved.

**ROB WARD, BARRIE, ONT.**

It is always a reason to rejoice when one finds a church willing to gladly put all its energy and resources to outreach. But is not the cost of setting up a campus in another area a great waste of money, time and energy when there are so many churches out there that would be glad of help in extending the work, especially among the youth? To set up a campus in another area where other churches are labouring is to infer that these churches are wrong and that only this new mission is right.

Further, one wonders if there is not a problem here with the cult of personality arising, especially with a charismatic minister? There have been too many examples of ministers building congregations and churches, only to

have the work slowly flounder when the minister moves on.

**CHARLES DILTZ, SUNDRIDGE, ONT.**

I am appalled by the way you describe Rev. Carey Nieuwhof as abusing his authority in the Presbyterian Church. I have attended the church for about two years now and will continue with the new church. My husband and I have searched for a church to take our kids to that would be appropriate to the times. We finally found a church to renew our spirits. Our kids talk about the church after attending and love the leaders that have led them into life change. We love the music and the way Carey is able to take verses from the Bible and put them into everyday language and apply it to our everyday lives. Finally we have attended a church that we talk about all week ... even our children talk about it and they are ages 11 and seven. Our little one even tells her friends about Jesus when she attends school.

What would it matter if the church took on different principles than the presbytery? If the presbytery didn't share the vision to reach as many people to lead them into life change then why would it matter if the church took on the principles of a new church that shared the same views?

Quite frankly, your article is A Grave Sin.

**JENNIFER MINOR**

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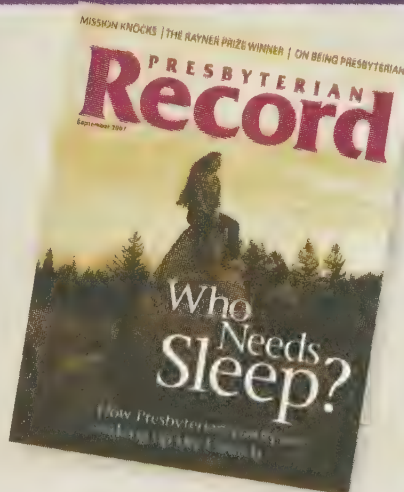
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# People Places

For more People & Places submissions, please visit our website:  
[www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)



One hundred and eighty-five years of Presbyterian presence were celebrated last August at St. Luke's, Salt Springs, N.S. Along the way the congregation stopped to give life membership certificates to seven people for their service and commitment. Amongst the recipients, from left, Karen MacKay, Rev. Barb Fotheringham, Frank Parker, Sandra McCulloch and Judy Hislop.



Before they become ministers many students at our three colleges work at summer charges, as did Peter D. MacDonald (middle), of Presbyterian College, Montreal, last summer. He assisted Rev. Adam Lees (left) at St. Andrew's, Whycocomagh and Little Narrow's, N.S. MacDonald got a full taste of a minister's life as he participated in funerals, baptisms, communion, did pastoral care work and conducted a very successful Vacation Bible School. He's seen here on his last Sunday with his father Rev. Glenn Sidney MacDonald, himself a retired minister, and a former member of Whycocomagh.

It may not be in the Book of Forms, but cutting the retirement cake, as we all know, really is the final signing on the dotted line. And, Rev. Paul Chambers, along with his wife Eileen, is ready. Chambers is leaving St. Paul's, Kemptville, Ont., and Knox, Mountain, Ont. In the background you can see tables loaded with goods for a children's project. To learn more about that, please visit our website.





"Praise the Lord in the deepest valley; Praise the Lord on the highest hill; Praise the Lord; Never let your voice be still." (*Book of Praise*, 466) Alva Irving, left, has been a choir member at Westminster, Paisley, Ont., for 60 years. She's never let her voice be still. Seen with her are organist Helen Cumming and Rev. Shelly Butterfield-Kocis.



Gordon Leggatt—the tall one in the middle—has been an elder at St. Andrew's, Wingham, Ont., for over 50 years and (take a breath) a choir member for 66 years! Merle Underwood and Janet Day, directly to his left, and Betty Richardson and Jo English to his right were five members honoured for over 200 years of joyful service to the choir. Catherine MacDonald is the lucky choir president.



This answers the age-old question: what do retired ministers do? Well, ploughing contests, of course! Rev. Ken Innes, Presbytery of Winnipeg, placed fifth in the Senior Conventional Plough in Thunder Bay, Ont., in September. *Photo courtesy Brent Linton, The Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal*

## Had cake lately?

See [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca) for instructions on how to submit to People and Places.

## Also on our website:

A baby boom at national offices; a youth movement at the Presbytery of East Toronto; Koreans in Sarnia; memorial book in Hamilton and much, much more.





The women of Lakeside, Summerland, B.C., had a gee-whiz idea. They started with a table and a tarp and soon graduated to a mini-café where they a) got to know each other, b) developed a Presbyterian presence in the community, c) were able to develop their own sense of ministry in an environment comfortable to them, d) got to know their community better and visit with many tourists, and e) raised \$3,000 for PWS&D. That's some idea!

# Health and Hope

The Life and Mission Agency examines the health of the church. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

THE HEALTH of the Presbyterian Church was an unofficial theme at the November meeting of the Life and Mission Agency committee, as the convener, Rev. Daniel Cho, began the meeting with an Arab proverb: "He who has health, has hope. He who has hope, has everything."

"We've been struggling with numbers for a long time," said Cho. "We need to focus on that, but our strategies should not just be about numbers, but about health. What can we do to strengthen our roots, our leaders, our congregations? If we neglect that

aspect, then this is strictly a numbers game, and what good is that?"

LMA general secretary Rev. Rick Fee encouraged committee members to get young people involved in mission, and to go on mission trips themselves, noting that their experiences will be a valuable resource to the church. "We have to be mission-minded and conscious of the decisions we make now because it will affect the future."

The health of the LMA's relationship with the *Presbyterian Record* was also on the agenda. The magazine's editor David Harris was invited for a ques-

tion and answer that focused primarily on the magazine's advertising policy.

"We're trying to define how the *Record* fits into the church," said Rev. Terry Hastings of Knox, Stratford. "We want to better understand that from the perspective of how the editor and the board see it, versus how we see it."

"Our readers are members of the PCC, and we're telling the story of their church primarily, though we talk about other faith issues in Canada and internationally," responded Harris. "We're there to serve that market, so, therefore, there is a close relationship."



Until 2000, the magazine was governed by a standing committee of the General Assembly, although it was generally understood that it was a "hands-off" relationship. In 2000, the *Record* became a separate entity when it became a federally incorporated not-for-profit. Last year, it also became a registered charitable organization. It is governed by a board of directors, whose membership is approved by assembly.

Committee members had numerous questions about the *Record's* advertising policy—especially the inclusion of polybagged non-PCC catalogues like World Vision and Canadian Food for the Hungry International.

Ann Taylor, president of the Atlantic Mission Society, asked whether this resulted in loss of givings to the PCC. Harris replied that while no specific research on that is available, the evidence seems to be that more choice encourages more giving. (For example, charitable donations rose about 50 per cent for both PWS&D and World Vision from 2003 to 2006, according to their published annual reports.)

Besides discussions about the *Record* (including two in camera sessions with staff), the committee also received updates from staff.

Lori Ransom, healing and reconciliation animator, reported that her department still has "a long way to go" in encouraging congregations to reach out to aboriginal people. She said most of the funding that has been distributed for healing and reconciliation projects has gone to existing native ministries.

The resource production and communication department noted that it will work on a large-scale, coordinated communication strategy for the church in the near future. It is hoped that the new website will soon enable presbyteries, synods and congregations to have their sites linked through the PCC website. The process of searching for a new communications coordinator is also underway.

Canada Ministries reported that the

church has to look more and more at its multicultural ministries, and ask if the church is doing its best to welcome them into the fold, to help newcomers adapt to the PCC's structures, and to include them in events and on committees.

Herb Gale reported that the planned giving office is trade-marking the ProVisionaries logo, which is the name given to the network of congregations that have committed to planned giving. Twenty-nine congregations were part of the network as of Nov. 2007.

PWS&D said it is planning on applying for more CIDA interns, and ideally, they want to fill those positions with young Presbyterians. Interns work with PWS&D partners

**"Our strategies should not just be about numbers, but about health. What can we do to strengthen our roots, our leaders, our congregations?"**

around the world. Ken Kim, associate secretary, also noted that refugees and migrants are a major issue that needs continuing study.

The committee also adopted the terms of reference for a new Hungarian advisory committee that will advise and consult with Canada and International Ministries on issues such as translating, determining where Hungarian congregations might be needed and consulting about grants and mission work. The committee will be a resource to presbyteries when needed.

Druse Bryan, president of the Women's Missionary Society, said although the WMS "has a great history, it does have to change and adapt." She said the society is examining how it is structured, and how it carries out mission. The new president of the Atlantic Mission Society, Ann Taylor, reported that the AMS' givings have gone up thanks to a new strategy where each auxiliary decides where it wants its money to go. ■

# BUILDING HOPE

**Happy New Year from  
19 new residents at  
Anishinabe Place of Hope.**

**R**oger said, "My mom was Aboriginal but I have not had any contact for 15 years. My health has been bad and I have had 12 surgeries. This house makes me feel good because there are people here who will care about each other for who we are."



**WICM**

**Susan** said, "I have many years of addiction. This is a new beginning and it moves my heart that people have come together to help us build our community. We will make you proud."

**Linda** said, "I have been sexually molested and lived on the streets in a life of drugs. One day I asked Jesus, 'What can I do to clean up my life?' Then I started coming to Anishinabe and now I am going back to school."

**Please help Anishinabe Place of Hope and Flora House offer meaningful programs to assist individuals and families living in Winnipeg's inner city.**

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# UN Adopts Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Church disappointed in Canada's non-compliance. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

A UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples passed in September is “fundamentally flawed and lacks clear, practical guidance for implementation,” according to Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and Maxime Bernier, Minister of Foreign Affairs in a press release. “It also does not recognize Canada’s need to balance indigenous rights to lands and resources with the rights of others.” Canada along with the United States, Australia and New Zealand declined to sign.

The declaration focuses on the equality and fundamental freedoms of all indigenous peoples including “the right to unrestricted self-determination, collective right to the ownership, use and control of lands, territories and other natural resources, and the right to maintaining and developing their own political, religious, cultural and educational institutions along with the protection of their cultural and intellectual property.”

It also highlights the requirement for “prior and informed consultation, participation and consent in activities of any kind that impact on indigenous peoples, their property or territories”, provides for “fair and mutually acceptable procedures to resolve conflicts between indigenous peoples and States,” and “establishes the requirement for fair and adequate compensation for violation of the rights recognized in the declaration and establishes guarantees against ethnocide and genocide.”

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has been monitoring the declaration’s progress (it was approved by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2006

before coming to the assembly), and when Canada balked at the document last summer, the church sent a letter to the government expressing its disapproval and urging it to adopt the declaration when it came around again.

“The decision by the Canadian government not to adopt the declaration is disappointing,” said Stephen Allen, associate secretary of Justice Ministries, “especially since Canada has played such an important role over the

**“Human rights are non-negotiable. They can’t be given and they can’t be taken away”**

years in working with other states and non-governmental bodies on various drafts of the declaration.”

The two decades-long process involved indigenous groups, human rights organizations, and UN member states. Though not legally binding, the international community formed a strong voice by approving the document by a vote of 143-4, with 11 abstentions.

Canada’s government has said it supports the “spirit and intent” of the declaration, but “further negotiations are necessary in order to achieve a text ... that will truly address the interests of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world.”

Ed Bianchi, coordinator of KAIROS’ Aboriginal Rights Program, told the *Record* that Canada’s decision to actively vote against the document, rather than simply abstain as some countries did, is especially telling.

“In essence, Canada’s vote says this administration does not understand the essence of human rights, or has chosen not to uphold them.

“Human rights are non-negotiable. Aboriginal people, as human beings, are born with rights. They can’t be given and they can’t be taken away. This declaration doesn’t create new rights—it simply says how they should be applied.”

Stephen Harper’s government has noted that since taking office in 2006, it has acted on an agenda that is “practical, focuses on real results, and has led to tangible progress in a range of areas including land claims, education, housing, child and family services, safe drinking water and the extension of human rights protection to First Nations on reserve.”

Such assistance is what Bianchi calls “program and services”—actions that are based on a charity model in reaction to a problem, rather than honoring the rights of Aboriginal peoples and ensuring they have the tools to prevent problems from happening.

Bianchi said although the document is not legally binding, Aboriginal groups can use it to advocate for their rights, and it will also become part of the larger human rights library. “Legally, it has no implications for Canada. It’s an entirely aspirational document. But for Aboriginal people, it provides acknowledgement from the international community that there is an understanding that as people, they have rights.

“This is moving towards a fairer and more just world, and Canada’s decision is a giant step backwards.” ■

# Healthy Turnout for Trinity

The work of the church is underway. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Oro, appears to be on its way to rebuilding its congregation. More than 190 adults, along with eight volunteers and 50 children, attended the first service following the departure of more than 1,000 worshippers to former minister Rev. Carey Nieuwhof's Connexus Community Church. Sunday worship is at 10 a.m. led by weekly guest ministers. A children's program is provided, a youth program is being developed, and small groups should soon be functioning.

In December the congregation had its first after-worship potluck lunch, which was the norm at one of the three original churches which amalgamated to form Trinity about a decade ago. Givings have also been strong, said Rob Ward, an adherent

active in the revitalization. Rev. Patrick Voo, the former associate minister, was scheduled to take the Christmas Eve service. (The *Record* went to press before Christmas.) "We are seeking His kingdom and He is building His church," said Ward.

The greatest immediate challenge is the preparation of a budget that will permit the congregation to carry its operating costs. The congregation has already paid down its building loan, thanks to funds that had been set aside for debt reduction, resulting in monthly interest payments that are half what they once were. Assembly Council subsequently approved a bridging loan of \$236,000 to retire the Royal Bank mortgage on the building. ■

## Minorities Forum

JUSTICE MINISTRIES will host a Forum for Ethnic and Racial Minorities in the Presbyterian Church in Canada on April 4-6 at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre, Puslinch, Ont. The theme for the event is Change and Diversity in the Church, and will feature Rev. Paulette Brown, a doctoral candidate at Knox College and former minister at University Presbyterian, Toronto.

The forum is a response to a consultation between Justice Ministries and racial and ethnic minority individuals and congregations. The department was preparing a response to an overture from General Assembly that requested a policy on racial harassment for the church. During these consultations, it became clear that there was a desire for a forum where racial and ethnic minorities could gather and share experiences and ideas, and vision together about what it means to be a part of the PCC.

The deadline for registration is March 1. The cost is \$150. Please contact Katherine Masterton in Justice Ministries at [kmasterton@presbyterian.ca](mailto:kmasterton@presbyterian.ca) for more information. ■ -AM

## PWS&D Launches New Way to Give

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT launched the Loaves & Fishes Fund, a planned giving fund that enables donors to give equity that is invested and used over a seven year period. Unveiled in October, the fund plays on Jesus' miracle of the multiplying loaves and fishes, creating enough to feed the multitude, with plenty left over.

"This is a major step forward for the PCC's long-term community development work overseas and for our partners. The Loaves & Fishes Fund allows us to commit to long-term efforts that address the root causes of poverty, and ensures that we can respond to emergencies wherever they occur," said PWS&D's director, Kenneth Kim, in a press release.

Gifts to the fund help PWS&D commit to long-term development projects by providing a steady income stream over a seven-year period. One-seventh of the gift is used to support the work of PWS&D in the year it



is given. The rest is invested by the professional fund managers for the Trustee Board of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Over the next six years, PWS&D uses the annual interest earned from the investment and a portion of the original gift to support ongoing development and relief work. At the end of seven years, the entire gift, plus all the income and capital gains generated by the investment, is used for the work of PWS&D.

You can invest in the Loaves & Fishes Fund through a variety of gifting vehicles: a bequest through your will, the residue remaining in a trust, RRSPs and RRI's, publicly traded securities, real estate, life insurance, charitable gift annuities, or special gifts of cash. Learn more at [www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd) under "Donate." -with files from PWS&D





# Support for Sudan

PWS&D is responding to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Sudan by sending life-saving food shipments and supporting relief efforts to help internally displaced people find hope and opportunity.

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## Debut Album Released

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S Heather Chappell has released her debut CD entitled *The Moon a Bullethole*. The album was officially released on Nov. 17 at a party at St. Matthew's United Church in Toronto. Chappell, who has been working on the album for three years, calls the album "a labour of love."

Chappell was raised in a musical family where instruments and harmonies were often present around campfires, the kitchen table, and the backyard barbeque. Her involvement in church choirs, high school musicals and vocal jazz ensembles brought those talents to the stage.

She describes her music as contemporary folk with Celtic influences. In addition to vocals, she plays accordion, penny whistle and mission organ, and wrote the music and lyrics for all but two songs on the album. Her talents are rounded out by husband Vincent Peets (guitars, bass, mandolin, banjo, harmonica), Gerard Sternik (percussion) and Brooke Richardson (violin). Chappell attends Glenview, Toronto, and is the program assistant for Stewardship, and Education for Mission at the national office. ■ -AM





# Money Raised to Help End Hunger Fast



Steve Bell

THE CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK raised about \$1,500 thanks to two sold out concerts by Christian artist Steve Bell. Bell travelled to Ethiopia in 2007 to learn about CFGB's work there, and

**The campaign inspires people to donate, pray and fast in support of CFGB's efforts to end hunger around the world**

returned with a desire to help end hunger. As a result, Bell and CFGB teamed up to create End Hunger Fast, a campaign focusing on food justice and how all people are connected. The campaign inspires people to donate, pray and fast in support of CFGB's efforts to end hunger around the world.

The concerts were held in November at Compass Point Church

in Burlington and featured Bell along with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. Much of the music from the night was taken from his latest album, *Symphony Sessions*. Concert dates for 2008 have yet to be confirmed, but tentative shows are being researched for the West coast, East coast, Ottawa and Kitchener-Waterloo areas.

To learn more about Steve Bell, visit [www.signpostvillage.com](http://www.signpostvillage.com). To learn more about End Hunger Fast, visit [www.endhungerfast.com](http://www.endhungerfast.com). ■ -AM

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# Taking Delight in Creation

PEOPLE MUST recognize God's delight in His creation, a prominent theologian told an eager congregation at St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal. Lethbridge-raised Dr. Norman Wirzba, currently chair of the Philosophy Department at Kentucky's Georgetown College, said only through that recognition can we fully see the miracles that abound around us everyday with love and respect.

In the wake of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Al Gore, Wirzba brought a theologically grounded message of environmentalism to the church's annual October series. Gardening, he maintained, teaches us the patient attendance of God's work that has disappeared since agribusiness and urban development took over farmlands, and biochemistry extended food-supply lines around



Dr. Norman Wirzba signs a copy of his book.

the world. We know neither where all that neatly-packaged supermarket food comes from nor who produced it. Wirzba recommended seeking out producers in local communities, getting to know them, and understanding the link between the food we eat and God's delight in sharing his Creation with us.

Wirzba is the author of *Living The Sabbath* and *The Paradise of God* and will be contributing to the *Record* in coming months.—Keith Randall

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### **Iraqi Christians worse off**

ENI—A Baghdad-based Anglican priest has declared that Christians are considerably worse off now than they were during the regime of Saddam Hussein, Iraq's former dictator.

"There's no comparison between Iraq now and [under Saddam]," Rev. Canon Andrew White said in an interview on the CBS newsmagazine 60 Minutes.

"Things are the most difficult they have ever been for Christians, probably ever in history," said White, a British cleric.

By some estimates there were once more than 1 million Christians in Iraq. The CBS report states that one-time Christian strongholds in Baghdad are virtually empty of Christians.

White said among those killed or kidnapped have been leaders of his own parish, whose bodies have never been found or recovered. As a result of the killings, White conducts "underground" services for what remains of his congregation. "When religion goes wrong," said White, "it kills others."

### **HIV/AIDS still a pandemic**

ENI—Faith-based campaigners and religious leaders say churches should not relax their efforts to deal with the HIV/AIDS pandemic despite UN figures showing a drop in the number of people worldwide living with the virus.

"This is not the time for complacency or apathy," said South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu in a statement to mark World Aids Day on Dec. 1. "It is the time for compassionate leadership."

Statistics released in November by UNAIDS and the World Health Organization have revised the estimated number of people living with HIV down from nearly 40 million to 33.2 million.

Rev. Hielke Wolters, a director at the World Council of Churches, noted that the majority of the 33 million people living with HIV are believed not to know they are HIV positive.

Wolters added that the rate of 6,800 new HIV infections every day, particularly in low and middle income countries and among women and youth, demonstrates that urgent and intensive actions are still needed.

### **Elderly and young need each other**

ENI—Europe's largest grouping of churches has noted the continent's steadily growing proportion of people aged more than 65 years old and is calling for the rediscovery of "the interdependence between generations."

The executive committee of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches said in a statement that less than three per cent of Europe's population was over 65 a generation ago, but that by 2050 it could be 20 per cent, with only half of the population of working age. "Elderly people need the younger as the young need the elderly. Above all, we wish to underline the strength and wisdom given to the elderly by their faith, as an encouragement to younger people to face the challenges of life, until the end, when the time comes to learn to give up in gratefulness, peace and hope."

### **Pope proposes meeting with Muslims**

ENI—Pope Benedict XVI has responded to a letter sent to him and other Christian leaders by 138 Muslim scholars, by inviting a group of its signatories to meet him and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

The Vatican's response stated in part, "Without ignoring or downplaying our differences as Christians and Muslims, we can and therefore should look to what unites us: namely, belief in the one God, the provident Creator and universal Judge who at the end of time will deal with each person according to his or her actions. We are all called to commit ourselves totally to Him and to obey His sacred will."

### **Christians celebrate 50 million Chinese Bibles**

ENI—Celebrations were held in China in December to mark the production of more than 50 million Bibles in the People's Republic by the Amity Printing Company, a joint venture between the United Bible Societies and the Amity Foundation, which is a Chinese Christian agency. The Amity Printing Company is the only body allowed to print Bibles in mainland China.

Beijing loosened restrictions on Christians in the 1970s following the end of the cultural revolution, after the death of Mao Zedong, the founder of the People's Republic of China.

Nevertheless, the Chinese government still tightly controls Christianity in the country.

### **Canadian on WCC body**

ENI—Anglican theologian Rev. John Saint Helier Gibaut, who teaches at a Roman Catholic university, is to head a post at the World Council of Churches that deals with matters of church unity. He will take his position as head of the WCC's Commission on Faith and Order in January.

Gibaut currently teaches theology at Saint Paul University in Ottawa, where he specializes in liturgical and historical theology. Gibaut earned a doctorate in theology from Trinity College, Toronto.

The 120-member WCC commission encourages theological dialogue to promote church unity. It includes representatives of WCC member churches and also non-member churches such as the Roman Catholic Church.

"The ongoing challenge is to broaden the circles and conversations around Faith and Order issues," the WCC statement quoted Gibaut as saying. ■

# Jesus Good

The Zeitgeist has spoken, religion is bad. BY ANDREW FAIZ

With friends like Bruxy Cavey who needs enemies? Cavey is a pastor with The Meeting House, a non-denominational church in the Toronto area. He's also the author of *The End of Religion: Encountering the Subversive Spirituality of Jesus*. In the preface he writes, "Religion uses rules to force our steps, guilt to keep us in line, and rituals to remind us of our failure to live up to those rules. In doing this, religion adds more weight to those who are already burdened with life's hardships. But Jesus offers us the rest we're searching for."

Cavey's message about religion isn't that far from Christopher Hitchens' whose book *god is not Great* is subtitled, *How Religion Ruins Everything*. Or for that matter, Bishop John Shelby Spong, who said in an interview, "Jesus steps beyond the boundaries of his religious systems and in one of the great quotations attributed to him, he says, that human beings were not made to fit into the Sabbath, that Sabbath was made to enrich the lives of human beings. I understand that to mean that no religious rule is a valid religious rule unless it enhances life and so long as we create religious rules that diminish human life, which most of them do, then we don't understand what it is we're talking about." Ouch!

A pastor in Colorado Springs, Chris Jackson, has just published a book called *Loving God When You Don't Love The Church*. It's subtitled, *Opening the Door to Healing*. Double Ouch!

It is unlikely that either Cavey or Spong would care to be seen in company with Hitchens, or vice versa. But, that's the strange thing about the zeitgeist—like two movies about volcanoes or about asteroids opening in the same week. But this is the water we're drinking these days, this is the popular theme: that organized religion is evil (Hitchens) or irrelevant (Cavey) or has long lost its roots (Spong). The latter two would replace religion with theological recasting of, as Spong calls it, the Jesus Experience. (Hitchens is an atheist, though his book, unlike those by Richard Dawkins, with whom he's been unfairly twinned, is more interested in damning organized religion than in proving the non-existence of God.)

Bishop Spong has a very smart idea that Christianity lost its way early on when it turned first century Jewish customs and culture into biographical absolutes. (That there is a hint

here of *The Da Vinci Code* and the gnostic gospels craze is interesting, and another zeitgeist coincidence.) He sees much of the Bible and particularly the Gospels as metaphor—ideas about ideas and not meant to be seen literally. I know a few people within our denomination who find this compelling—that there is a true way and it does not exist within the 2,000-year history of the religion. (Here too is a zeitgeist thing: that somehow western culture got it all wrong; if only we were as pure as eastern cultures, or aboriginal cultures. (No need to write me about the fallacy of that argument, I'm merely your reporter, and, anyways, you've heard it a thousand times.)) Religion bad, Jesus good.

**"Christian churches accept and love people unconditionally." Seventy-six per cent of pastors agreed; 40 per cent of churchgoers agreed; 20 per cent of people outside the church community agreed**

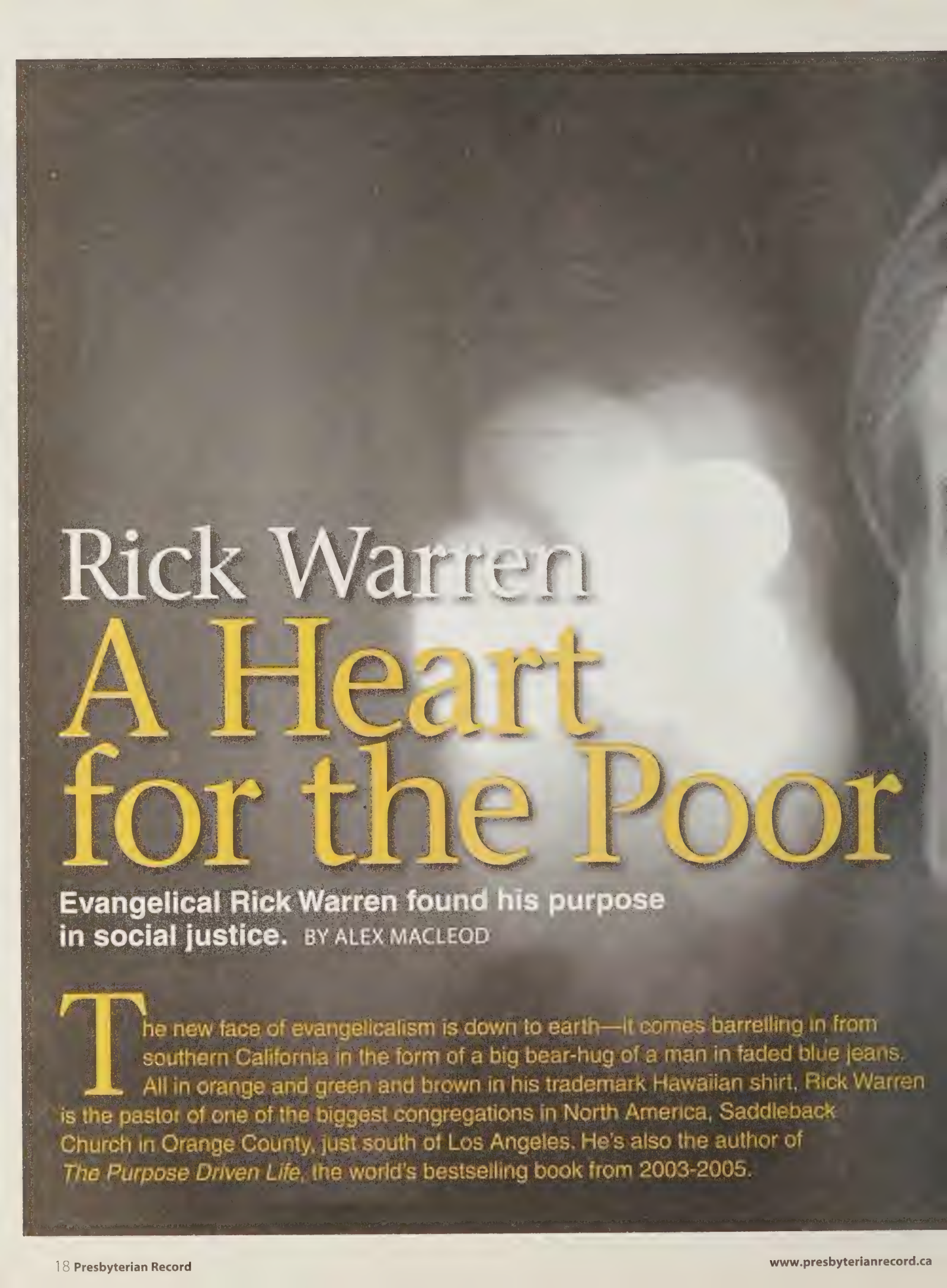
And it's a message repeated endlessly—one more example: The Barna Group is a pollster in the States which focuses on Christianity. Its latest book, *unchristian*, has scads of statistics that draw a sharp line between the institutions of Christianity and the message of Christianity. One little statistic says a lot to me: Seventy-three per cent of those polled over age 42 said they had "made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ," but only 48 per cent of them were "absolutely committed to the Christian faith." In the younger group, ages 18-41, the difference was much more stark: 65 per cent committed to Christ, 20 per cent committed to the faith.

One last stat to chew on: 1,620 people are polled on this statement: "Christian churches accept and love people unconditionally." Seventy-six per cent of pastors agreed; 40 per cent of churchgoers agreed; 20 per cent of people outside the church community agreed. In other words, those who work for the institution say its fine; those who participate in the institution are guarded in their opinion; those who see it from outside are downright critical.

You can draw your own conclusions. ■

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# Rick Warren A Heart for the Poor

Evangelical Rick Warren found his purpose  
in social justice. BY ALEX MACLEOD

**T**he new face of evangelicalism is down to earth—it comes barreling in from southern California in the form of a big bear-hug of a man in faded blue jeans. All in orange and green and brown in his trademark Hawaiian shirt, Rick Warren is the pastor of one of the biggest congregations in North America, Saddleback Church in Orange County, just south of Los Angeles. He's also the author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, the world's bestselling book from 2003-2005.



Rick Warren

PHOTO © CANADIAN PRESS IMAGES



I met Warren a year ago at a mission conference for university students in St. Louis, Mo. Along with his wife Kay, he spoke about the role the North American church can play in responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa. Over three days, I raced after him through downtown St. Louis, interviewing him in various settings, including a one-on-one conversation and a prolonged interchange with another journalist, sitting in on press conferences with him, hearing him lead a range of seminars and, in the end, joining 20,000 other onlookers at the plenary talk he delivered, which included a cameo appearance from Bono of the rock band U2.

On the surface, Warren may line up with the stereotype some people have of a typical megachurch leader. At 53 years of age, he's the consummate baby boomer—relentlessly charismatic and casual. He can talk and entertain and talk and not stop talking for alarming stretches of time. He conjures up impressive numbers every couple of minutes, highlighting his own success and promoting his church and his books. His sense of humour is charming, despite the inevitable football analogies. He travels the world exuding entrepreneurial confidence in the importance of his particular version of the Christian message.

"There are a lot of people in the church and in the whole world who disagree on a lot of different things," says Warren. "That's true. But we do agree on this: we do agree on God's love for the world, we do agree that He loves every individual, we do agree that the AIDS crisis is a tragedy and that it can be prevented, we do agree that God calls us to stand up for the vulnerable and weak, to speak for those who have no voice or whose voices have been ignored. We have so much we need to work on and so much that we could agree on, and we are finally realizing that we do agree to a large extent. That's where we need to start. And that may be different from what some people understand evangelicalism to be, where in the past we tended to start with our disagreements and what we're against. But now we're looking to build up from common ground."

And there's no denying that Rick Warren can build with the best of them. In 1979, he moved from Texas with his wife, Kay, and their new baby girl to Saddleback Valley in southern California to plant a church. He had no particular plan for how it was going to happen, but he had learned that Orange County was growing faster than any other part of the country and that seemed like a good location in which to try something new. For weeks he went door to door and met people in whatever way he could. He listened to their impres-

sions of church, mostly comments about why they thought it was irrelevant to their lives. And, along with Kay, he started a small group in the living room of his tiny condominium.

Three months later, Warren got up to preach his first sermon in front of 200 people. He told them to look forward to a day when their church would grow to 20,000 people. Playing at both prophet and cheerleader, he went further and proclaimed to the gathered congregation that this megachurch would eventually rise up on 50 acres of land. Three years ago, on its 25th anniversary, Saddleback Church rented the stadium where the Anaheim Angels play baseball and filled it with 50,000 worshippers because its 120-acre campus does not have sufficient room to accommodate the whole church at one service.

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"Building the church was the first challenge," says Warren, "and we did that with small groups. Saddleback wouldn't work without our small groups—that's where people get excited about God, where church becomes really relevant for them, that's where people spring into action. But then we were given a new vision. We started to teach others how to plant churches and make them grow. Eventually our whole focus came to be summed up by this word 'purpose' and that has taken me through two books and a world-wide ministry network, training pastors and other church leaders, into a much

more global orientation and a preoccupation with putting an end to poverty and AIDS in Africa and throughout the world." Warren has devoted the last three years of his life to mobilizing the members of Saddleback Church for the challenge of defeating global poverty, in particular the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa.

The books, above all, have catapulted Warren into a different orbit. Based on his success at Saddleback, he first wrote *The Purpose Driven Church* in 1995. In 2002 came the real rocket-launcher: *The Purpose Driven Life*. Good sales were expected, but the results took everyone by surprise, except, that is, for Rick Warren. To date, the book has sold more than 30 million copies, making it among the best-selling works in the history of publishing and making Warren very wealthy.

The genius of *The Purpose Driven Life* is the way it helps people to see their existence as meaningful. It opens readers up to something bigger and then tries to lead them to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. That is also Rick Warren's genius. He makes a vital connection to the common longing for an experience that transcends life's frustrations. Still, criticism has come fast and furious. From accusations that he ignores the importance of sin and the need for repentance to



being dismissed as the purveyor of a simplistic pop theology, Warren has been attacked from every quarter. But the numbers suggest a different version of the story. It may represent an inadequate individualistic version of the gospel, but *The Purpose Driven Life* has found its way into millions of homes and has clearly met a need.

Warren calls it an “anti-self help book.” In its first paragraph, he writes: “It’s not about you. The purpose of your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. It’s far greater than your family, your career, or even your wildest dreams and ambitions. If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. You were born by His purpose and for His purpose.”

Ironically, when the truckloads of money from royalties for *The Purpose Driven Life* began to roll in, Warren had to figure out his own purpose, all over again. “I found God’s purpose for me in Psalm 72,” he explains. “In that psalm, Solomon asks God for more influence and power, which seems strange because he was already a powerful king. But if you read on you see why; it’s so that he can better defend the oppressed, better save the children of the needy, and more effectively come to the rescue of those who are weak and vulnerable. I had been given influence but until that time I had not seen how I was called to pursue justice. There’s so much in the Bible about poverty and how God has a heart for the poor and I’d missed it all. I was safely insulated in Orange County, but then I resolved to change all that.”

After years spent focused on his own backyard and the growth of Saddleback Church and its related ministries, Warren set out to transform the North American church and through it, the world. “Mostly, the church is known for what it’s against rather than what it’s for,” he suggests. “I intend to change that. I think we need to be known for what we’re for. I’m for the poor, I’m for the sick, I’m for the uneducated, and I’m for treating all people with respect and dignity. Let’s be known for what we’re for and what we’re doing. Let’s reattach the hands and feet to the body of Christ.”

Warren has put his money where his mouth is and now “reverse tithes,” by living on 10 per cent of his income and giving away 90 per cent of what he has earned from the sales of his books. He and Kay have founded three charitable foundations which channel most of these funds to a range of causes around the world. Kay Warren runs Acts of Mercy Foundation and he directs the vision of the other two: Equipping Leaders and the Global Peace Initiative. When AIDS came to their attention as a global tragedy of epic



Kay and Rick Warren of Saddleback Church, Orange County, Calif.

proportions, they sat down with leaders of the gay community in California to discuss how they could fight it together, at home and overseas. Africa quickly came into focus for the work of his Global Peace Initiative and, in particular, the Warrens’ contribution to the global effort to defeat AIDS.

A remarkable opportunity soon presented itself in Africa. After Paul Kagame, the president of Rwanda, read *The Purpose Driven Life* he decided to call Warren and ask him for help. Soon Warren and Kagame, who was not a religious man, were discussing how to turn Rwanda into “the first purpose-driven nation.” A Rwandan government delegation visited Saddleback Church and, in turn, approximately 6,000 Saddleback members, including some world-renowned leaders in health care, education, business and international development, have travelled to Rwanda for various assignments over the past three years. Each one of the 2,600 small groups in Saddleback focuses on a particular village or town in Rwanda.

The Global Peace Initiative is ambitious. Warren ➤



outlines its goals by means of the acrostic P.E.A.C.E. No surprise there; Warren has few rivals in his ability to spew slogans and acronyms at a dizzying pace. P.E.A.C.E. stands for: Plant church (or Partner with existing churches); Equip servant leaders; Assist the poor; Care for the sick; and Educate the next generation. Ultimately, the initiative comes back to the local church for Warren.

"Like everyone, we are daunted by the scope of the world's problems. But we are also confident that the church as God's presence in the world can offer hope like nothing else. Only the church is big enough to tackle global poverty. No corporation can begin to match its reach. There are countless local congregations out there, millions of them. You'll find a church everywhere, even in places where there's no school, no clinic, no government office and no international development agency. The churches will distribute what needs to get to the people; they will care for the people. And they'll do this better when they have well trained leaders. That's where church networks and the cause of social justice come together. It's a hope that comes from God and no merely human effort can match it."

Warren surprises a lot of people. Megachurch leaders are not usually associated with innovative attempts to redirect the interests of their privileged suburban members' commitment to the pursuit of social justice. Evangelical big-shots have more often been associated with conservative politics and the culture wars surroundings such hot-button issues as abortion and gay marriage. But Rick Warren also personifies a new evangelicalism which rejects the assumptions of the religious right.

"One of the problems in the church today is that evangelicals are no longer known for good news, they're known as a political force. People always ask me, are you left-wing or are you right-wing—and I say that I'm for the whole bird. A one-winged bird will fly around in circles. You can't fly with one wing; you have got to have two wings." Still he shows no reticence about divulging his contacts in Washington. He is close to George W. Bush and has frequently assisted the president as an adviser on issues related to faith and church; and yet he simultaneously manages to count Hillary Clinton as a good friend. In December 2006, Warren invited two prominent politicians to the second annual AIDS conference at Saddleback Church. One of them, Republican Senator Sam Brownback of Kansas, was a natural fit. Raised as a Methodist, Brownback became a "born again" Christian before migrating to the Roman Catholic Church in 2002. For more than 10 years, he has worked as a tireless

advocate for the religious right in Washington.

Barack Obama, on the other hand, did not belong. As a senator for Illinois since 1997, Obama was a staunchly pro-choice Democrat. He had distinguished himself as a rising political star, but offered no track record that would obviously endear him to conservative Christians.

Warren describes the encounter: "When they [Obama and Brownback] were at Saddleback, I said that I want to pray for both of you guys and I held hands with both of them. I said to them [respectively]: this is the face of compassionate conservatism and this is the face of compassionate liberalism. What I like about both of them is the compassion part. The compassion part is the Jesus part. The other

stuff isn't going to matter in heaven. What's going to matter is the compassion. Can we get along here? Can we have a little civility? Can we not demonize each other? We all believe that people need to live so let's work together to make that happen. Let's maximize the compassion."

Peter Heltzel, a professor of theology at New York Seminary, identifies Warren as a sign of what could be a new consensus in North American Christianity.

"The nasty divisions of another era are fading," he observes. "Evangelicals are rediscovering an emphasis on social

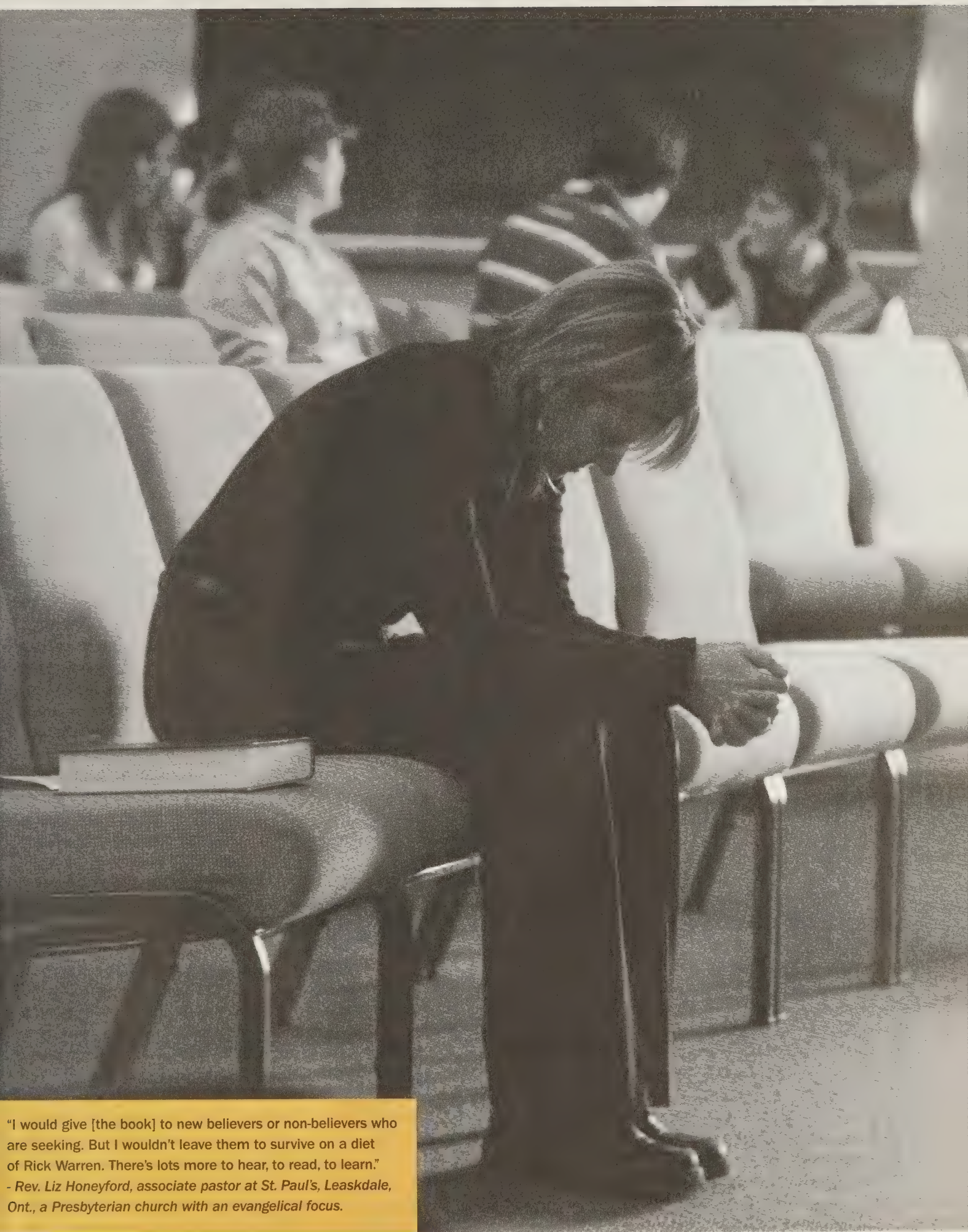
justice which all along had been embedded in their genetic code. Liberals are acknowledging the ground-breaking work that evangelicals have done over the last 20 years in reforming the church and translating the message so that it comes across in the native language of the culture around it. If Jerry Falwell represented a combative way of being a Christian, one that was hostile and defensive towards the world around it, Rick Warren is the antidote. He's the great symbol right now of how stereotypes can be overcome and people can do the unexpected."

Hans Kouwenberg, moderator of the Presbyterian Church's 2007 General Assembly, sees this new evangelicalism as a sign of renewal. "Evangelicals need to learn from their mistakes like anyone else. People get tired of certain people singing the same song over and over again; you sound like you're a crank. Evangelicals have tried to be strong on personal morality, but in some ways they've overdone it. It's a welcome development that evangelicals are now saying that the church needs to be involved with big issues like poverty, global injustice. It goes back to the foundation of the evangelical tradition which always had justice in view."

According to Kouwenberg, "Warren should be seen as a pioneer. He was and is at the forefront of North American Christianity, saying that we have to do Christianity in ➤

Warren has put his money where his mouth is and now "reverse tithes," by living on 10 per cent of his income and giving away 90 per cent of what he has earned





"I would give [the book] to new believers or non-believers who are seeking. But I wouldn't leave them to survive on a diet of Rick Warren. There's lots more to hear, to read, to learn."  
- Rev. Liz Honeyford, associate pastor at St. Paul's, Leaskdale, Ont., a Presbyterian church with an evangelical focus.





a different way. But, I think Warren over-reached himself with Rwanda. He wanted to develop the purpose-driven nation. I've been to Africa. Anyone who comes from affluent North America and who thinks they can dictate terms to an African nation has some learning to do. That's a nation that needs to ponder its failure, not think about whether it can be purpose-driven, whatever that means. The purpose-driven model may work on a personal/individual level, but I'm skeptical of Warren's global ambitions."

Rev. Carey Nieuwhof, on the other hand, applauds Warren with fewer reservations. "He is a man of great vision and he's obviously able to motivate people like few others. At Trinity Community Presbyterian Church [in Oro Township, Ont.] we did the 40 days of purpose and studied *The Purpose Driven Church*. We read books together as a leadership team. It was a useful exercise; it encouraged us to re-imagine what church could be. We do that all the time. We study some of the cutting-edge innovators in church leadership.

"I wouldn't necessarily see Warren's new vision as a shift towards the left," reflects Nieuwhof. "It's a shift towards compassion. Within the evangelical tradition in Christianity, people are always returning to their first calling, which is to respond to Jesus and to point others to him. That's the reason that evangelicalism should become more compassionate—less

concerned with what we know and more concerned about the extent to which we truly reflect Jesus."

As for Warren, he hopes to embrace it all within his mega-congenial bear hug Christianity. He talks in animated fashion about the promotion of a "coalition of civility." He says that he's tired of polarization in the church. He wants to bring people who may have thought they were enemies together to address the greatest needs of our world. He suggests that the new evangelicalism should shut its mouth more often and seek to be known instead for the fruit produced at its hands.

"I am not a member of the religious right; I am not a fundamentalist. I am an evangelical. Some of us are very careful about the definition of those terms; we're saying that those terms—religious right, fundamentalist, and evangelical—are not the same. If you can only work with people you agree with, then you have ruled out the entire world because no one agrees with you perfectly. And so if you want to make a difference you have to work with people you disagree with on different issues, but you can disagree without being disagreeable."

Liz Honeyford, pastor at St. Paul's, Leaskdale, Ont., would certainly fall into that category. "In the States you can buy *The Purpose Driven Life* everywhere. I was amazed. You see it in convenience stores, at gas stations, pharmacies, you name it. But I wonder about this mass media experience. You always have to give something up; you seem to lose what really matters.

"It's different in Canada. Rick Warren doesn't come across as well here, although I've seen his books in many places here. But we're far more cynical and secular and private than Americans. Warren is really charismatic, he's the life of the party—but that's one culture. It's not as relevant to our situation. The times I have handed his book out, people always say that it really helped them. I would give it to new believers or non-believers who are seeking. But I wouldn't leave them to survive on a diet of Rick Warren. There's lots more to hear, to read, to learn."

Nieuwhof shares some of the same concerns: "Warren is most significant for his great gift of translating the gospel into the culture of his day and age in southern California. His situation is different from ours. The purpose-driven model reflects a modern rather than a post-modern culture. Warren did a great job at translating the gospel for rich baby boomers. I'm a Gen-Xer and he's not so much on my wavelength. And then there's another generation coming up right behind. It's not on our terms anymore, if it ever was. We find that we're always needing to learn new languages. We have to experiment. We have to be open to change." ■

Rev. Alex MacLeod is University and Young Adult Ministries worker at Knox, Spadina, Toronto.



# Building Relationships

Evangelism is about risk-taking and self-giving.

BY CHUCK CONGRAM

**H**e approached me immediately following worship and, in a calm but confident way, declared that he would never be a member of this church because he could never believe in Jesus. I often wonder why someone that confident about what they don't believe ever bothers to show up in church. Subsequent conversation with "Brownie" revealed he had recently been through a difficult marriage breakup and, on the arms of some friends, had initially shown up at a Friday evening Celebrate Recovery event. One of the most memorable and joy-filled times of my ministry was the Sunday he stood before a congregation of 500 and declared his commitment to Christ and to service in His church. Evangelism—the process of helping an individual to find their way from skepticism and doubt to personal faith in Christ—can be seen more clearly when there is a face like that of "Brownie" attached. In relating his story, we come to understand the kinds of components which position a church for effective ministry in this arena.

## **I. A commitment on the part of Christians to build meaningful relationships with those who are not believers.**

This becomes particularly strategic when an individual is experiencing a traumatic life event and, often for the first time, is expressing a sense that life isn't working very well for them. Other people cannot



expect to be of practical support and encouragement in that kind of situation if they have not made a significant investment in the individual's life prior to this time. Brownie didn't show up for the first time with strangers or on his own initiative. He came with trusted friends.

## **II. An entry point which is relevant to the needs of those without a faith base for their lives.**

During the last several years, our congregation has seen significant numbers of individuals come to faith in Christ either through our Alpha program or Celebrate Recovery. The former is a well-known introduction to the basic tenets of the Christian faith and is used effectively by many congregations. The latter is intentionally designed for those with "hurts, habits and hang-ups," focusing particularly on enabling individuals to ►



walk through a 12-step program that is deeply rooted in Christian principles. In his wounded person, Brownie needed a safe place where he could know and be known.

### III. An invitation to a church service where the participants actually looked like they were enjoying the experience.

An individual whose life is weighed

down by personal pain does not need to be put in a context where the music is funereal, the message is irrelevant and laden with theological terminology and the people appear overwhelmingly bored. All the while that Brownie held to his convictions that he could never believe in Jesus, he continued to show up on Sundays because the aliveness appealed to some of the inner parts of his life which seemed to have died.

### IV. A deep resolve to walk the ongoing journey to Christ-likeness with individuals who cross the line of faith.

It would be both foolish and naïve to try to pretend that life is easy and uncomplicated for Brownie these days. It is anything but that! Yet he is in a context of individuals who openly acknowledge their ongoing struggles for faithfulness and share his struggles without judgment or disdain.

Rick Warren aptly described most Christians when he suggested they have a great desire to catch fish, but they want them to be pre-cleaned. Developing a church with a heart for evangelism is no easy task. It is not a matter of a session decision. It does not result from forming an evangelism committee. It will not be empowered by a new line in the budget. It will arise only when the hearts of individuals within the congregation develop a heart devoted to the calling. Robert Quinn, in his great book *Building the Bridge As You Walk On It*, states that organizations, in current culture, will move either towards deep change or slow death. He truly believes those are the only two options. Four things are identified as characteristic of the slow death path. These include the tendency to be self-focused, to be internally closed (denying the signals which call for change), having leadership that is consumed by a desire not to offend or cut off and having an excess of longing for comfort. Any congregation eager to embrace the evangelism challenge in current culture will require a cadre of people eager to develop relationships of a type rarely known. They will be other-focused, risk-taking, discomfiting, self-giving and often formed with people in difficult circumstances. The reward, however, will come from seeing a wounded, unconvinced human being transformed into a wholehearted Christ follower. Bring on the "Brownies"! ■

Rev. Chuck Congram recently retired from St. Andrew's Lakeshore, Tecumseh, Ont.



Our client, Fernie House Child and Youth Services, is focused on modeling and encouraging socially acceptable and morally responsible behavior amongst troubled youth. The organization seeks the skills of a talented and experienced...

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Generally, the Executive Director works to oversee the provision of Child Welfare Services and Youth Justice Services, always keeping improvement strategies for services rendered at the forefront. Excellent communication skills are a must, as the Executive Director liaises not only with employees and community agencies, but with clients and different levels of government, plus outside community groups.

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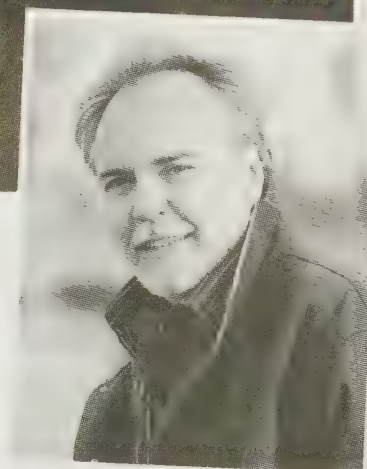
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**ROBINSONFRASER**

The Biloxi, Mississippi, chapter of the Richard Lett Fan Club has its one and only meeting in New York City.



Comedian Richard Lett

# Never, Ever Alone

A Canadian comic makes his New York debut, with a little help.

BY RICHARD LETT

People are more than a little surprised to find out that I have attended church regularly my whole life, and presently sit on the board at Central, Vancouver, because I am one of Canada's most controversial and edgy stand-up comedians. With CDs entitled *Am I Being Insensitive* and *At Least There's Drinking*, it's easy to understand why fans and colleagues would see this in conflict with following the teachings of Christ, or even a belief in God.

"Why do you go to church?" they

ask incredulously. I usually joke that being in my 40s, it's a pleasure to go anywhere where people say to me, "It's so nice to see young people here!"

I believe most people have been in, and felt the presence of, God. My faith is not based on wondering if God might exist, for I know He does. My faith wanes when I lose belief in myself, not God.

\*\*\*

I was determined to get my New York City debut show. I had performed stand-up comedy in every pub, club

or life-threatening situation across Canada, but had never performed in the birthplace of stand-up, and the Holy Mecca for all its practitioners. I finished my shows in Montreal and took the bus across the border to see what I could find.

I stood in Times Square, on probably the most famous intersection in the world, neon signs bigger than my hometown, June morning sun reflecting off infinite towering glass. I was alone and took a photo of myself, proving to everyone, and myself, ►





The author in Times Square.

that I had made it there.

I bought a *Variety* magazine and found the comedy section. There are more full-time comedy clubs in Manhattan than in all of Canada. I bought a phone card, stationed myself at a phone booth outside Trump Towers and started cold calling.

The policy in general at comedy clubs in New York City is that early in the week, you can get on the stage if you bring friends and family willing to pay the cover and a two-drink minimum. They are called "Bringers" and they are not the most flattering way to achieve stage time, but that's the way it is. The higher the status of the club, the more people you have to bring.

Of all the clubs I got through to on the phone, Stand-Up New York was the most famous. Everybody from Jackie Mason to Jerry Seinfeld plays it. Jody, the woman who handles the booking at Stand-Up New York, tells me that I can do a set the following Tuesday if I bring 10 people. I think of everyone I know in New York, and if they each bring one person. "How about six?" I ask.

Jody pauses on the phone and says, "Okay, six. But remember, if your people don't show up, not only will you not get on, but we won't like you very much."

I thank her emphatically. I start hunting down my three friends. It's Thursday. Lots of time.

Thursday—before Memorial Day weekend ...

Finally Tuesday comes around and the city is back up and running. My friends, who had assured me they would make it, now talk of being exhausted and needing to stay in. It becomes clear to me by about noon that none of my people would be showing. "Darling," one of them say, "no one goes out the day after a long weekend." A sense of doom follows me as I wander around Hell's Kitchen and sit in Memorial Park. I try talking to tourists to tell them about my show, but with no free tickets or even a flyer, the effort quickly proves futile. It's mid-afternoon, and still several hours until my scheduled show, but I can think of no way to get six people there. I give up and slump against my bench. According to my subway map, Stand-Up New York is on West 57th. What lies between the club and me is the most famous park in the world. I decide to take a walk.

Central Park is glorious: endless paths of moss and green, lakes upon lakes upon lakes, and boulders cropping up, an eternal connection to the earth. Situ-

ated in the middle of the busiest, noisiest city of 14 million people, somehow the park absorbs it, and only the breeze in the leaves and a distant clip-clop of a horse and carriage can be heard. I strolled past baseball diamonds, Woody Allen sets, paddle wheelers and pretzel stands, finding myself a part of it.

As I walked, an irony struck me. "How strange," I thought (or said, I can't be sure), "to be in such a beautiful place and have no one to share it with, to be here alone. And then in a voice as clear as mine (and less raspy) I heard three words that have kept me going through even the harshest of circumstances. He said, "You're not alone."

I smiled. "Right. Of course, how could I forget that?"

I found a boulder, and I climbed up, took off my boots and socks, rubbed my feet, and prayed. Prayed as hard as I ever had. I said, "Lord, don't worry about the show. If this is it, if this is where my little jokes have gotten me, to be in this beautiful place with You, then I am good."

Then I took out my notebook and looked at my material. Jody said I had seven minutes, so I went over the jokes. I walked through the park and found Stand-Up New York in time to watch the end of the show before mine. Posted on the marquee was a photocopy with a list of names. Mine was third.

Jody walks up. "Richard, where are your people? It's quarter to, they're supposed to be here by now."

"I think they're late."

"Well, can you call them?"

I said, "Sure." I stepped outside with my dead cell phone to my ear, pretending to call, pacing and looking at my watch.

Two beautiful blonde girls bound out of the dark. "Oh here it is!" one of them squeals.

I said, "Are you here to see the comedy?"

"Yes," they spout in unison, jumping up and down excitedly.

I said, "Are you here to see anyone in particular?"

"No, we're just here to see comedy."



I don't know if in the history of New York comedy and its "bringer shows," this idea has ever been used before but I just acted on impulse. I said, "Are you sure you're not here to see ...?" I pointed to my name on the sign, "Richard Lett?"

The girls looked at me, and bit hard. Their eyes sparkled with stars. "Are you Richard Lett?" I smiled. "Yes, yes. We're here to see Richard Lett!!!" An older man followed. The father of the two, obvious by his tired but enthusiastic smile, stood behind them.

I said to him, "Would you mind telling them at the box office that you're here to see me?"

He said "Sure, as soon as the rest of our people get here." A cab pulls up, and three guys jump out.

**The Biloxi family could care less about Chris Rock. They love me; they wave at me and give me the thumbs up. I even have to gesture for them to return their attention to the stage**

Jody walks out, and I grin. She says, "I knew your peeps would show."

Nobody bothered to ask how this family from Biloxi, Mississippi, knew this comedian from Vancouver, B.C., but being the Tuesday night after a long weekend, they represented a full third of the audience, and that's all that mattered.

I was sitting at the bar going over my notes in my book when Ellen Cleghorn from *Saturday Night Live* came in. She had dropped in to do a set, and so a few comics got bumped. Not me though, I had my people out there. As Ellen's getting ready to go on, she looks over at me and beams a smile, pointing at my book. "It's all funny. I can tell." Wow!

While Ellen is on, Carolyn Rhea shows up. If the backstage wasn't buzzing before, it is now. Jody walks around telling some other comics the bad news, and then she walks up to me. "Carolyn's talk show got cancelled so Carolyn's probably gonna do about half an hour, then you're on for seven."

As planned, my material is well thought out and smooth on delivery. The audience hits for me right away, and my Biloxi family are thrilled. My two angels sit front and centre, their peals of laughter emanating as the room fills up. At exactly seven minutes, I close with my talking car bit, and my first New York audience erupts with an ovation. As I cross the floor, I can see a crowd of comics gathering by the booth. A kid grabs my arm: "Chris Rock is here."

And sure enough he is. Before I can think about my own set, one of the world's best comics, and a personal hero of mine, follows me to the stage and does an hour.

The Biloxi family could care less about Chris Rock. They love me; they wave at me and give me the thumbs up. I even have to gesture for them to return their attention to the stage.

After the show, I stood surrounded by my newly acquired fan club (Biloxi chapter). Rock walked by. I said, "Good set, Chris."

He said, "Thanks, you too."

The girls scoffed. "You were the best!" As Dad bought my CD with a crisp American twenty, I explained to the girls that Rock had been working on new material, and I was doing my "A" stuff, but it didn't matter to them. That day wasn't about Chris Rock for them. For them, that day was about Richard Lett. A memorial day to be sure.

As I rode the subway back to Queens, I was left with one of those unwipeable grins as I considered the events of my day. The path from a prayer on a rock, to my New York City debut, to credibility and purpose, to sharing the stage with Chris Rock. And His kind and knowing hand in all of it. His Presence not just in beautiful parks and churches, but late shows at comedy clubs too.

And that's why, if you attend a Presbyterian church anywhere in North America, you might see me some Sunday, looking like I don't quite belong. A road comic—on his own. But never, ever, alone. ■

Richard Lett's website is: [www.myspace.com/funny4money](http://www.myspace.com/funny4money)

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# On His Own Needs

Jabez' prayer does not reflect our reality. BY JOYCE GLADWELL

## The Prayer of Jabez

by Bruce Wilkinson

Multnomah Publishers

**B**ruce Wilkinson's promotion of the prayer of Jabez does not sit well with me. I have a wormlike feeling of unease when I read Wilkinson's booklets, even before I can name what disturbs me.

Jabez appears in the Old Testament. Within a list of genealogies in I Chronicles, he receives special mention as one who "called on the God of Israel ... and God answered his petition."

Jabez made requests: that God would bless him and enlarge his territory and that God's hand would be with him, keeping him from harm and free from pain. Wilkinson recommends that we do the same, repeating Jabez' prayer phrase by phrase, expanding on each request, and claiming various blessings for ourselves daily.

Why would I take exception to this exercise of faith, this call to adopt a prayer recorded in Scripture and honoured by God?

In his prayer, Jabez is entirely focused on his own needs. From time to time, so am I. But shall I do so repeatedly, exclusively, making Jabez' prayer my daily model? I already have a model—the Lord's Prayer—and here the focus is not just on me and what I want. Here Jesus places God's will and God's kingdom before my daily needs. Here also I acknowledge that I belong to a community of sinners to whom I owe forgiveness as I am to be forgiven.

My problem with praying for me first and me only is that I live in a world

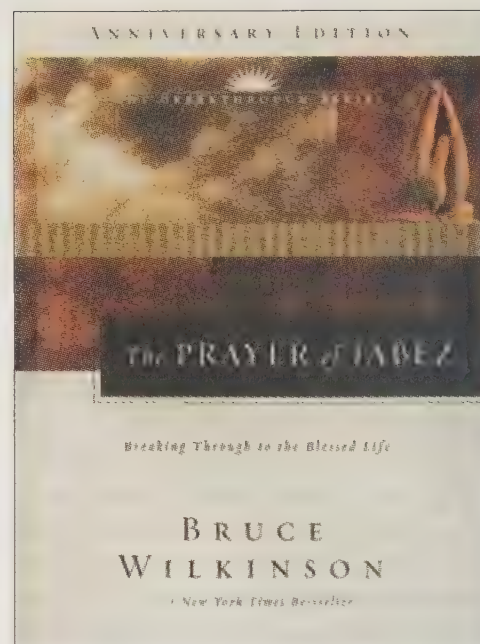
where images reach me instantly from all parts of the globe. These images haunt me, and invade my prayers: the angular starved bodies from Darfur, African children orphaned by AIDS, terror and grief in Palestine, streaming millions of refugees. What are my needs compared to theirs?

As for territory, the statisticians tell me that living in North America, I belong to that five per cent of the world's population which consumes up to 80 per cent of the world's resources. I have more than my share already. The resources I consume come from far afield: oil from the Middle East, avocados from Brazil, mangoes from Mexico, my winter coat and my cell phone from China. Together with my fellow North Americans, my territory is enlarged beyond what the planet is able to bear. Should I be asking for more?

I turn the pages on Jabez' prayer, and find other messages from Scripture that speak more aptly to my circumstances: Be content with such things as you have. A person's life does not consist of the abundance of the things she possesses. Sell what you have and give to the poor.

Jabez prayed out of the needs and limitations of his circumstances: he had no social safety net as I have, no friendly banking system, no pension plan. His best insurance policy was expanded territory, and he turned to God to grant him this.

When I cry out with Jabez to be kept from harm and pain, I do so knowing the measures that surround me to keep me safe, and meet my extreme need. For Jabez there were no hospitals, no



fire stations and no police. Because I can draw on these resources, I can add thankfulness to my prayers.

Because I have so much, I am cast more in the role of benefactor than of supplicant. Can I hear the Jabez cries of my global neighbours? Will I be God's answer for them in granting their urgent requests?

What Jabez had was a generous helping of faith, and I can learn from this. It does not mean that I should imitate Jabez' prayer phrase by phrase.

What I learn from Jabez' experience is that God is gracious and will join me wherever I am in my journey; that God is ready and willing to meet my needs, and to give me the desires of my heart; above all, that God honours me when I believe and trust and depend on Him.

How then shall I pray? Beyond Jabez, I learn from Jesus something more, a different perspective in praying: not to use vain repetition, not to keep asking for my personal needs, since my heavenly Father knows that I have need of these things. I do not even have to ask God at all. Instead, I am to seek first God's kingdom and God's righteousness, and I am promised that all these temporal blessings will be added to me.

Jabez prayed according to his circumstances and according to the light he received, and so must I. ■

Joyce Gladwell lives in Elmira, Ont.



# Disconcerting but Worthwhile

*Blood Diamond* asks what is precious. BY KATHLEEN KONRAD

**"N**o one is a refugee by choice. Refugees are forced to flee their homes out of fear for their lives and liberty." This quote from the Presbyterian World Service and Development website summarizes how refugees become displaced.

The movie *Blood Diamond* portrays this plight by providing a graphic representation of the atrocities that occurred in Sierra Leone in the 1990s. The explicit violence and exploitation of children are painful to watch, and the coarse language is hard on sensitive ears. However, the very reason *Blood Diamond* is so disconcerting also makes it worth watching. It provides a glimpse of the ordeal some African refugees have had to endure. Many innocent victims lost their homes,

***Blood Diamond* explores the question of what is precious—diamonds, family, love, or life itself**

families and even limbs, especially hands. Amputation was a common sign that the Revolutionary United Front had attacked a village. This was part of RUF's strategy to keep civilians from voting and to keep them away from the valuable diamond fields.

*Blood Diamond* explores the question of what is precious—diamonds, family, love, or life itself. North Americans consider diamonds precious, but are they worth the price of spilling innocent blood?

Unfortunately, it is sometimes difficult to tell where diamonds have come from since diamonds from war-torn zones are often smuggled to a neigh-

bouring country before being falsely certified and passed off as legal diamonds. They are then mixed with legitimately mined diamonds, making it almost impossible to distinguish them. Conflict diamonds, also called blood diamonds because of the blood shed to get them, are not sold with tags identifying them as such. However, due to the growing awareness of conflict diamonds and the travesties their acquisition has caused, some diamond retailers now provide a guarantee that their diamonds are conflict-free. The reliability of that guarantee, unfortunately, is debatable. It is up to the consumer to insist on conflict-free diamonds.

For more information about curtailing the sale of blood diamonds, visit the Take Action section of [www.blooddiamondaction.org](http://www.blooddiamondaction.org).

By bringing the situation in Sierra Leone to our attention, hopefully *Blood Diamond* will help to ensure that history does not repeat itself in other African countries such as the Ivory Coast or the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where conflict diamonds play an active role in supporting rebel activity.

Although RUF was defeated in 2001, in Africa there are still approximately 200,000 child soldiers—brainwashed killing machines. The trade of conflict diamonds perpetuates this situation.



Eventually many of these children—those who survive their ordeal—will become refugees requiring compassionate and empathetic help. Civil war in Sierra Leone is over, but the repercussions of the conflict diamond trade remain. More than 20,000 amputees and other war victims lost their homes and were placed in refugee camps.

"PWS&D aids refugees the world over by providing food, shelter and education to those living in refugee camps, helping those who can return home rebuild their lives, or for those who can't, helping them find a new home in Canada." ([www.presbycan.ca/pwsd/refugees.html](http://www.presbycan.ca/pwsd/refugees.html)) ■

*Kathleen Konrad is a member of Central, Vancouver.*



# The Protestant Liturgy

The point of worshipping God is worshipping God. BY STEPHEN HAYES

Kathleen Norris, the American poet and author well known for her meditations on the Christian faith (*The Cloister Walk*, *Amazing Grace*), refers to hymns as “the Protestant liturgy” in one of her books.

When I first encountered that phrase, I thought about it for a moment: “Yes, that’s it exactly.” We all have a liturgy in our Presbyterian churches and it is the hymns we sing week by week. For many of us there is more to liturgy than that, but this much at least we all share. The hymns we sing constitute one of the main vehicles for our praise and worship.

Therefore, they should be well chosen to convey the worship of the congregation and to coordinate with the central theme of the service, usually expressed in the sermon.

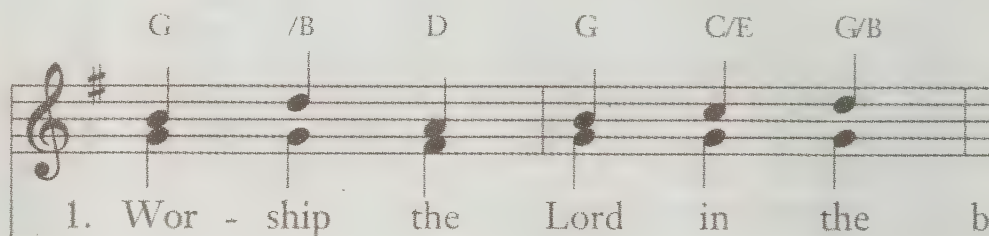
And, secondly, they should be well-rehearsed by the organist, who is to grasp the sense and movement of the hymn and play in a manner that supports the singing of the congregation. That means not too fast and not too slow. The crazy idea that imaginative playing of hymns means always playing them at top speed has to be forgotten. The organist is leading the congregation in its liturgy and should play in accordance with the meaning and purpose of the hymn, allowing time for the congregation to breathe between lines, encouraging and supporting their praise of God by the manner of his or her playing.

Thirdly, the best hymns are about God and not about ourselves. As Rick Warren says in *The Purpose-Driven Life*, “It’s not all about you.” Be suspicious of hymns that use the words “I, me, mine” too often. The point of worshipping God is worshipping God. The very word “liturgy” means “the work

Epiphany

## 174 Worship the Lord in the beauty

MORDUN 12 10 12 10



of the people.” We go to church to do something and to do it together: to offer the worship that belongs to God. The test of worship is not feeling good but actually offering that worship week by week. Our best hymns aid us marvelously in this regard.

Modern worship may well be in the process of being corrupted. The culture of self-centredness has allied itself with a culture of entertainment and has long since invaded our churches. We therefore use profoundly unbiblical criteria to assess worship, thinking that we are being both biblical and spiritual.

But is it biblical to be so self-centred? It is the church corporately that is the body of Christ: the emphasis is on the totality of the church and not the individual. We are the body of Christ together and then individually parts of it. Is it biblical to reduce so much to our feelings? A modern Christian preacher wrote this scathing comment on modern spirituality: “Spirituality is about being good, not about feeling good.”

For 2,000 years Christians understood only too clearly what their job, their liturgy, their work was: to gather in community to do something, to offer the worship that belongs to God.

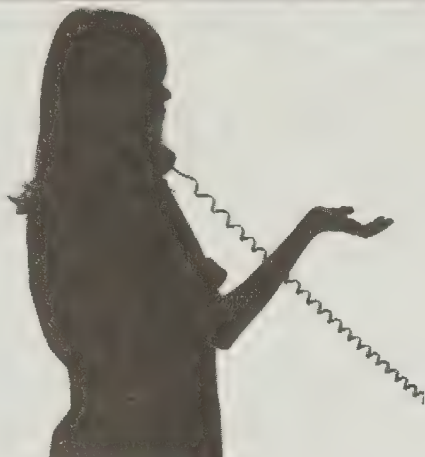
Are we now in danger of changing that so that “church” means feeling good, being entertained, being amused?

No sane person would assert that feelings don’t matter: of course they do. No one that I know is opposed to jokes, amusement and human warmth. Of course we all want and value these things. But that is a very different matter than asserting that we go to church to be entertained.

“God is a Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth for the Father seeks such to worship Him.” And why does God seek our worship? It is for our sake, not His. We are fulfilled as human beings as we relate to our Maker and Saviour in the act of worship. The creature made in the image of God seeks that after which s/he has been made. But the benefit of that can only occur when we actually worship God and not ourselves. The corruption of worship is a profound corruption of human destiny and the design of God for our lives as we seek to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. ■

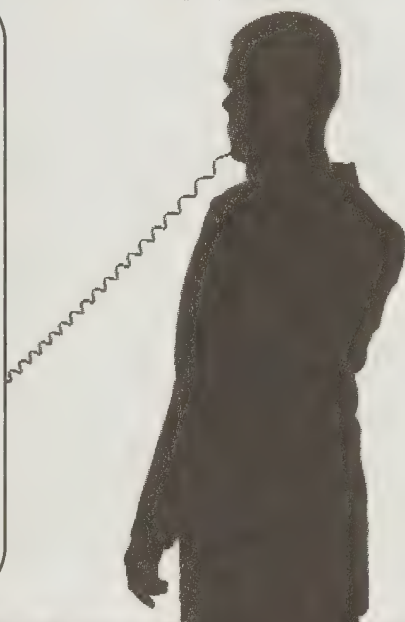
*Rev. Stephen Hayes is the minister at St. Andrew’s, Quebec City.*

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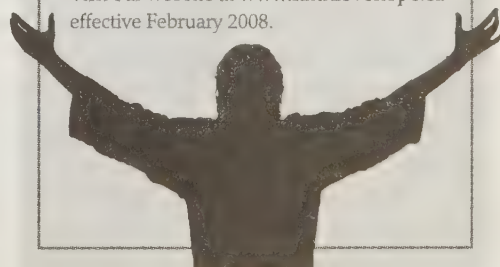
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A play at the local Legion, 1930s

# Presby-assyrians

They escaped persecution to form a unique community in Saskatchewan.

BY JENNIFER HIGGS

The story of a small town and congregation in rural Saskatchewan begins halfway around the world and more than 100 years ago, when settlers from Persia came to North Battleford to build their future on Canadian soil. They fled from religious persecution and formed a Presbyterian community that continues to influence worshippers today.

In the late 1800s, Turkish Ottomans ruled most of the Middle East, including present-day Iraq and

Iran. Islam was the state religion. Christian missionaries in the area were successful in conversions, but had no rights and had to practice their religion in secret.

Dr. Isaac Adams, a Presbyterian minister and medical missionary, encouraged Christian Assyrians to immigrate to Canada. Adams, an Assyrian, trained in Scotland. He led the first group of 36 people from Persia (present-day Iran) to North Battleford in 1902.



Michael and Racheal George, early 1900s





School reunion, July 2003.

The Assyrians have a rich history that includes their founding of the oldest Christian church. The Assyrian empire in the Middle East (Mesopotamia and northern Iraq) flourished from 2500 to 612 BC.

### **They were fleeing for their lives. They were being persecuted because you couldn't be Christian there**

Margaret Beach, a member of St. Andrew's in North Battleford, is the granddaughter of one of the original Assyrian settlers and remembers stories from their journey. "When they travelled, they travelled by foot at night because they were fleeing for their lives. They were being persecuted because you couldn't be Christian there." The group had to be careful of bandits and Turkish patrols.

On their journey, they passed famous sites including the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and Mount Ararat in northeast Turkey, said in Genesis to be the resting place of Noah's Ark. The colony boarded an Assyrian ship in Hamburg, Germany to head to Halifax. They shared space with animals and had little to eat but loaves of bread. From Halifax they travelled by train and oxcart towards the West. They arrived on New Year's Day, 1903. The Canadian government was seeking to populate the West, and for \$10 newcomers could own a piece of land after working on it for five years.

Beach's grandfather was one of

the settlers who spent their first cold winter in Winnipeg, arriving at North Battleford in the spring to find only tents. Together they built a large house for shelter (later it was converted into the Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford).

In 1906, Dr. Adams returned to Persia and brought over another 40 settlers—including Beach's grandmother and mother, then 12 years old.

Each Sunday, the Assyrians met in homes to have a worship service. "They had their own minister speak their own language," Beach explains. Her first language was Assyrian. "As the families grew, the children went to school to learn English and we all started the Presbyterian church in North Battleford."

Beach's father came to North Battleford when he was in his twenties. He had learned English at a Presbyterian mission school in Persia. North Battleford developed and gained a Canadian National Railway connection, and her father was able to find work there as an engineer.

The majority of Assyrians who came to North Battleford joined the Presbyterian Church. The town paper nicknamed them Presbyassyrrians, and published several articles on the settlers.

Outside of their homes, the congrega-

tion's first meeting place was in a railroad boxcar. The first local Presbyterian church was Knox, opening in 1906. After building a new church, many Knox members joined the Methodist Church to become part of the United Church of Canada. Members who remained Presbyterian formed St. Andrew's. The location of the congregation changed several times. Finally, in 1961, St. Andrew's had a new church building that became the congregation's permanent location.

The Assyrians have always played a vital role in the church. Beach remembers going right from school to church, where she participated in mission band, choir, Presbyterian Youth and Girl Guides. Later, she was an elder and on the board of managers. ➤



A special memorial plaque was dedicated in 2003.



North Battleford (population 13,500) is on the North Saskatchewan River with Battleford across the banks. Battleford was the capital of the Northwest Territories until Saskatchewan became a province in 1905.

The Assyrians have some customs they continue in North Battleford. They focus more on Jesus' resurrection than birth, making Easter their High Holiday. On Good Friday, women

gather and visit the graves of loved ones at the cemetery. Afterwards they have tea and eat a meatless lunch at the home of the woman who has most recently suffered a loss.

Many unique food dishes are part of their Assyrian custom. On Easter and Christmas, special dishes are made like haresa (boiled wheat and chicken breast). Different kinds of cabbage rolls are a popular dish; in Persia they raised

sheep, so often the rolls are made with lamb instead of beef.

In 2003, Beach organized a centennial celebration of the Assyrians' arrival in North Battleford. She had help from Rev. Elizabeth Marsh and a committee, and they invited hundreds of people to the September weekend celebration. More than 200 Assyrians came to North Battleford from across Canada and the U.S. The festivities included the dedication of four plaques, a banquet with presentations and the Sunday service held in English and Assyrian.

"It was very nostalgic for a lot of people. People who hadn't been home for years came back," says Beach. The guests included grandchildren of Dr. Adams.

Beach, 76, has four children and eight grandchildren. She has lived in North Battleford all her life. Though no longer serving as an active elder, she remains involved in many aspects of the church. Beach coordinates services at the local nursing home once a month.

Rev. Elizabeth Marsh was St. Andrew's minister from 1995 to 2004. Now retired, she says the 2003 celebration weekend was a highlight for her. "They [the Assyrians] arrived there and there was nothing but swamp in North Battleford," she recalls. "They were instrumental in building the city of North Battleford, as well as the church."

Marsh remembers the many ways Assyrians were involved in the congregation. "The church was the focal point, socially and spiritually, for them." As often as possible, Marsh would include the Assyrian language in the church services.

The early settlers gained their own land, freedom and a lasting relationship with the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

"They went through a lot of hardships," says Beach, "But they persevered, and thank God they did, or we wouldn't be here." ■

*Jennifer Higgs is a freelance writer and frequent contributor to the Record.*

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# Full Time Cheerleader

New drugs, depression, fatigue, lack of appetite—these are heavy loads.

BY PATRICIA SCHNEIDER

**M**y husband has cancer. Sometimes I feel like a yo-yo, up one moment, down the next. The strong, firmly-fleshed body that warmed the bed at night is now thin as a rail and sometimes even a small hug hurts too much. Although it is the worst of times, it is also the best of times. I see God in the faces of so many who try to help. The Cancer Clinic in Edmonton was so good to us. The one here in Grande Prairie is so personal and cares so deeply. They are as delighted as I am when the chemo treatments seem to be working. His pain is less, mobility greater and appetite improving. But there is more chemo ahead and it is like walking through the

valley of death. Not so much physically; the new drugs are wonderful, but the depression, the fatigue, the complete lack of appetite in a man who once lived to eat. These are heavy loads.

Although I have been a church member for years it is about 10 years ago that my husband, who had been a very active adherent, decided to make his beliefs public and join the church. My private meditations now include him as he listens to psalms and excerpts from books I know lifted me in the past. I speak more easily now about the faithfulness of God and we often pray together.

We have talked a bit about his death.

We know it is inevitable. He remembers when he was in the Air Force and sent me my engagement ring. I couldn't imagine waiting months for his transfer west so went by rail nearly 3,000 miles to be with him. He says I came to him then and when he leaves this earth I will come to him again. These are hard things to say and bring tears but they are beliefs that carry us through.

I am naturally optimistic but it is often hard to be a cheerleader when you know you are losing.

One evening I broke down sobbing at bedtime. My husband reached over and gently comforted me. How I would love to recall every one of ►



those precious words.

Next morning he couldn't get out of bed. Home care arrived, assessed the situation and called an ambulance.

After 54 years, someone else would now take care of my husband. That really hurt. Family Only, read the sign on his door. Our daughters wept as they said their goodbyes but he smiled when he saw our granddaughter, and called her "my little pork chop."

Next afternoon he was struggling somewhat and I bent over him and asked, "Are you in pain, sweetheart?"

"No, pain, no pain whatsoever," he assured me as his restless arms fell quietly to his side.

"He is going to go quickly," the nurse advised. As my tears fell I bent over him and whispered, "Thank you, sweetheart, for all the wonderful years we had together, and for our two little

girls. Now go to the Lord. I will be okay and I will be there with you sometime soon." And I kissed his warm cheek until it was no longer warm and I thanked God that he had slipped away so gently and I had had the privilege of walking part way with him.

Now I gaze out the window and watch the leaves fall and the geese fly south. It is a new season for me too.

In the meantime I will grieve, yes, but I know that God will not forsake me and that He holds me in His hand with tenderness and love. I remember His faithfulness in the past and I am not afraid. ■

*Patricia Schneider lives in Grande Prairie, Alta.*



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# Of Bumper Cars and Harpoons

You are young at heart until you decide you aren't.

BY PHIL CALLAWAY

**M**y grandfather Callaway was a combination of the graceful and the geezer. He loved a good laugh, but he also loved to talk about his ailments once the entire family had gathered around the dinner table and the food had been doled out. "So I remember when the doctors had to root through me and take out my spleen. Stayed awake for the whole thing. Watched 'em dig it out there all wrinkled and green. I asked 'em to pickle it for me. Put it in a jar. I kept it for years on the counter. Looked like a big hairy cucumber. Hey, where's everybody going? Mind if I eat your carrots?"

Grandpa gained a lot of weight in those days, and we saved money on groceries.

I once enjoyed an evening with a 75-year-old by the name of Donald Cole. Mr. Cole hosts a radio show and travels the country speaking at conferences. During our conversation, Mr. Cole mentioned to me that he runs several miles a day, which caught me off guard—like having a guy in a Smart Car pull up to a stoplight and challenge you to a race.

I got thinking about how nice it would be to jog when I'm 75. Maybe it's something my wife and I could do together. She could drive me out of town and drop me off; it would give purpose to my running. So I said something dumb to Mr. Cole. I said, "Boy, I'd sure like to be running like that when I'm your age."



He said, "Are you running now?"

I coughed slightly. I said, "I ... ahem ... came third in a relay once."

He said, "If you aren't running now, you won't be then."

And it hit me that all of us are in training for the days to come. That if we are impatient, unkind, and unforgiving, we won't wake up at 65 to discover that people want to be around us. This made me wonder: what kind

of an old guy will I be? And how do I live so my kids will want to visit me in the nursing home? By then I will have silver in my hair, gold in my teeth, lead in my feet, and lots of natural gas, but I won't be wealthy without friends.

The older people I admire are those who live life on purpose. I fear that if some of us wrote down a mission statement it would look something like this:

I will consider myself a success ►



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when I'm rich enough to do nothing  
but travel and eat. When I can have it  
the way I want it, when the jerks around  
here start leaving me alone, when I've  
got a big screen TV and nothing but  
time to watch it. I will consider myself  
a success when the world wakes up to  
the fact that I'm marvellous.

I wrote down a few more things I  
admire in older people. It came out as a  
little poem and I showed it to my mother.  
She smiled her approval, so I pinned it to  
her bulletin board. Here it is:

You are not too old until you stop  
making new friends,  
Until you start fighting change.  
You are not too old until your past is  
bigger than your future,  
Until you think the bad old days  
were all good.

Until you talk more of ills, spills,  
wills, and bills than thrills.

Until you begrudge the spotlight  
turned on a younger generation  
And stop shining it on them yourself.

You are not too old as long as you  
can pray.

As long as you have the inner  
strength to ask

How can I spread hope around?

How can I get the most out of the  
years I have left?

How can I make others homesick for  
heaven?

You are young at heart until you  
decide you aren't. ■

*Phil Callaway is the author of a dozen  
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# Baptism of Jesus

God's sons and daughters are set loose in the world in the Spirit's power. BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

*January 13, 2008:*

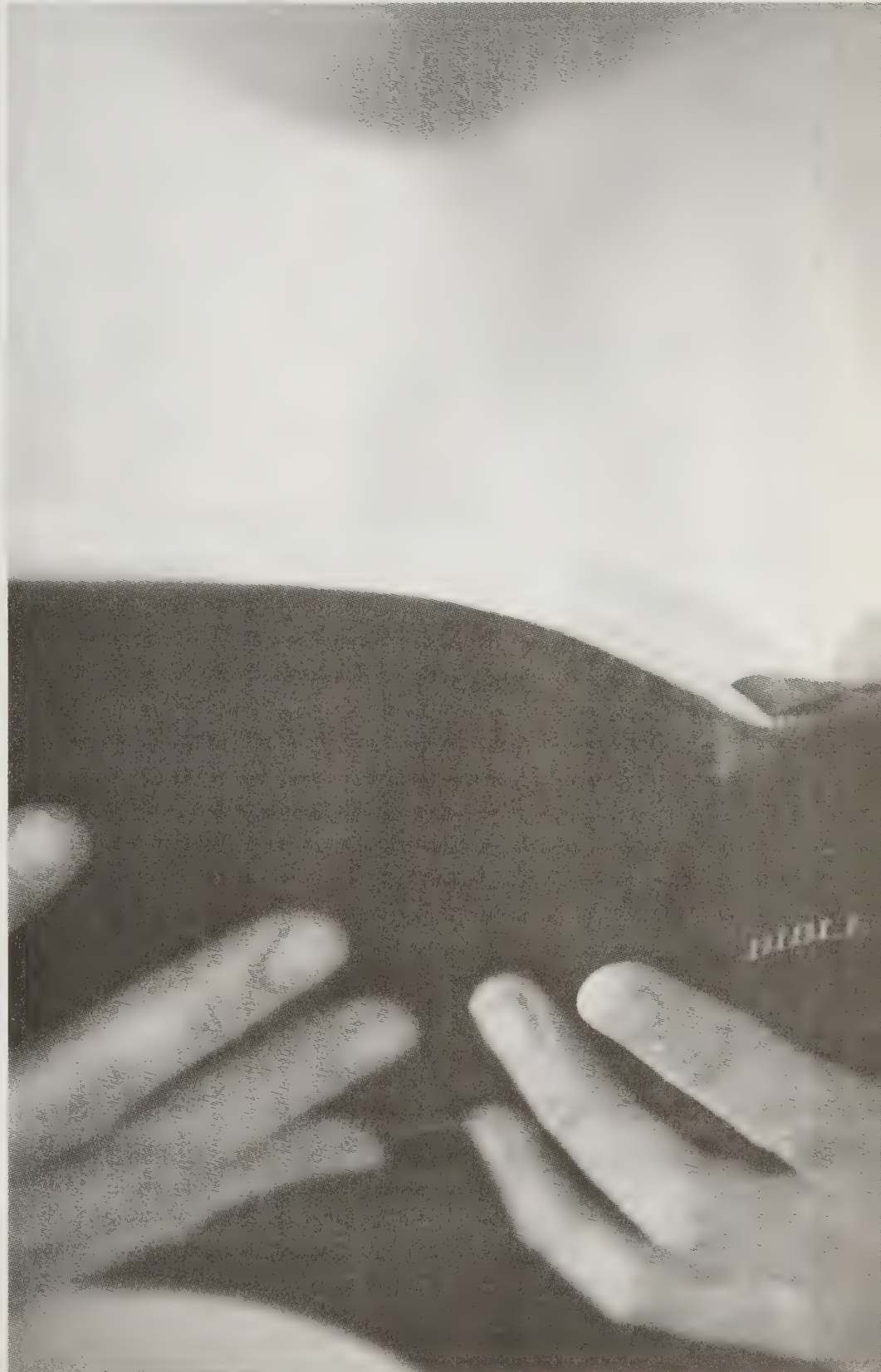
*Matthew 3:11-17 & Acts 10:34-43*

**W**hen did Jesus become the Son of God? Before you run to your computer to send a complaint to the editor—how dare he print the words of a heretic!—consider this: Before the first Christians had any ideas about the pre-existence of the Christ, the first Christology was adoptionist. Before John wrote, “In the beginning was the Word,” the first Christians had a story about John baptizing Jesus. Even before Luke wrote his second chapter, the Gospels being written backwards from Easter, the church shared the story of the Spirit descending on Jesus. It’s in all four Gospels. Three say God called Jesus “my beloved son” after he was baptized.

It seems the first Christians knew little and cared less about the details of Jesus’ origin. Yes, two stories were eventually written about Jesus’ birth.

**It seems the first Christians knew little and cared less about the details of Jesus’ origin**

The early church was content with two stories of his origin that don’t quite mesh, just as the Hebrew ancestors were happy to have two stories of creation that put things in different order. The first gospel proclamation, reported in Acts, began with Jesus’ death and resurrection. When the apostles and others began to tell more about Jesus, they started with John the Baptist’s ministry. Then they went on to tell how “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and





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with power" (Acts 10:38).

That doesn't mean the Spirit wasn't with Jesus before he was baptized. But for the faithful people who gave us the Gospels, it really all began for Jesus when he was baptized. Actually, after the Spirit had driven him through his trials in the desert. Tested and proven, Spirit-filled, he truly was the Son of God.

If we think he was Son of God only, or mostly, because he was somehow begotten, we miss the point. The first Christians called him God's Son after they saw him in action. They didn't wait to work out how he might be God's Son by nature. How his sonship was his unique state of being, proving his divinity. They looked, listened, felt, and confessed with Peter, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). When the pagan centurion at the cross saw how Jesus died, he called him "a son of God." "Son of ..." used in that way says nothing conclusive about kinship. It's a declaration that so much of God was revealed in Jesus, to see him was to see God. To Jesus' people, a-son-of-a-something was the biggest, best representation of an ideal. The highest mountain was a "son of a mountain." The biggest rock was a "son of a rock."

#### **The first Christians called him God's Son after they saw him in action. They didn't wait to work out how he might be God's Son by nature**

For the first Christians, to say Jesus was "Son of God" was like saying, "To see him is to see God." In the story of Jesus' baptism, God says, "This is my Son." Which is to say, "When you see him, you see Me. Or as much of Me as you will ever see close up. Which is a lot!"

The Gospels don't agree, or care (see John and Mark) about the details of Jesus' origin. But all agree that he was baptized and received the Spirit. Then he went to work. Different New Testament communities had different ideas about where Jesus came from and what that meant. All had this in common: Everyone had been baptized, like Jesus. All knew the story of Jesus' introduction to the world.

As they learned the stories of his life, they saw the Son of God in action. They saw the pattern for their lives. And dared to think of themselves as his sisters and brothers. By baptism, God's sons and daughters, too. Set loose in the world in the Spirit's power, so others could see at least a little of God in them.

When did Jesus become the Son of God? Let's look beyond what the church says we're supposed to believe about who he is and how that can be. Listen to the Gospel stories, beginning with his baptism. When the time was right, when the Spirit descended, he began to be God's Son.

And what does baptism make of us? ■

*Laurence DeWolfe is the minister at St. David's, Halifax.*



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# Grouse from the Glass

Providence provides perfectly. BY DAVID WEBBER

**W**HAM!  
“What on earth was that?” exclaimed Linda. Her voice sounded exasperated, even filtered through six inches of Dania Down. I was already standing in my short-handled Stanfield’s, framed in our large picture window, squinting out into Saturday’s brilliant January morning sunshine.

“I’ll be!” I said. “It sure shook the house though.”

“Maybe you better go find out?” Linda said. “It sounded like an explosion, like some kind of bomb went off or something.” By now she was standing beside me, gawking all around, peering across the frozen lake.

A quick trip to the coat rack and I was wearing my parka and felt pack boots with just a hint of Stanfield’s showing between the two. “Hey sexy, you could put on your pants you know,” said Linda. “It is minus 30 outside.”

It was too late. I was already standing on the deck holding a very dead ruffed grouse by its two hind legs. “This bomber is your bomb,” I said. “Must have flew all the way across the lake. These guys can really travel and from the feather pattern on the glass, it looks like he nailed our picture window at top speed. It’s a wonder he didn’t blow the window right

out of the frame. Poor guy, from his perspective, with the brilliant winter sunlight reflecting off the window like a mirror, he probably thought he was just flying over more lake. Judging from all the feathers on the deck, it must have been an explosive experience for him too.”

“Praise the Lord!” said Linda. “And gut the bird. God provides again.”

“Ah, providence,” I said. Linda looked at me like she always does when I attempt to wax theological, and her eyes are particularly attractive covered with just a hint of glaze.

We did not dine on “pheasant under glass” that night. We dined on “grouse from the glass.” And it was good. To say that it was a surprising supper is an understatement, but that is not what makes me smile when I remember it. It causes me to think about our old friends Rob and Leena.

We ran into Rob and Leena last summer in the parking lot of the grocery store in 100 Mile House, B.C. We had kind of lost track of them for a bit, they being retired and footloose. They were boondoggling all summer, camping continually and only where it was free. They had found a nice little lake back in the bush that is noted for its fishing. It was a lifestyle that totally suited them and their theology.



I've come to appreciate that Rob and Leena are masters of living in the providence of God.

When I asked Rob if he had caught any fish in the lake he said, "Nope, didn't have too. Every time our fridge got empty someone happened by and offered us fish. Funny thing though, it only happened when the fridge was empty."

We talked a while longer about their summer and Leena ended our conversation with, "Praise be! God always provides!"

"Ah, providence," I said. Leena looked at me the same way Linda does when I wax theological.

The providence of God. I have pondered it at some length. I suppose it is kind of an occupational hazard for a Presbyterian. In my pondering, I have spent a fair bit of time between the covers with the likes of Augustine (*The Confessions*) Calvin (*The Institutes*) and Charles Hodge (*Systematic Theology*). They use the word "providence" a lot and they have an awful lot to say about it. They give short clear definitions. They give long theological treatises. To be quite frank, these theological masters tend to muddle me more than help me in my pondering. I end up with the same look in my eyes that Linda has in hers when I try to wax theological.

In my pondering I have spent a fair bit of time searching the It appears that the word providence is a theological word, not a biblical one. What the Bible does do is tell stories illustrating it, stories that elicit praise. The whole book of Esther is such a story in the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus' story about "considering the ravens" is another one in the New Testament (Lk.12:24ff). My favorite is the Psalms, where providence stories and hymns of praise are often blended into one. My favorite is Psalm 136, where verse after verse is an example of how a sovereign loving God specifically creates and then passionately cares for His creation. Each verse washes over me like the waves of the mighty Pacific Ocean on a sandy Tofino beach. And between each ebbing verse, each wave, there is the receding response, the outflow, the mantra: "His steadfast love endures forever."

It's 2008, a brand new calendar year. The other day someone wished me good luck in the New Year. Like Rob and Leena, I don't put much stock in luck. A saying has been attributed to both Stephen Leacock and Thomas Jefferson: "I'm a great believer in luck. I find that the harder I work, the more I have of it." I don't believe that either. Hard work has never been enough to provide me with hope for a whole day, let alone a whole year. I am facing this New Year like I face every single day, knowing God in his providence provides perfectly. "His steadfast love endures forever."

Psalm 136:1-9; 23-26

- 1 O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,  
for His steadfast love endures forever.
- 2 O give thanks to the God of gods,  
for His steadfast love endures forever.
- 3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords,  
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- 4 who alone does great wonders,

- for His steadfast love endures forever;
- 5 who by understanding made the heavens,  
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- 6 who spread out the earth on the waters,  
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- 7 who made the great lights,  
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- 8 the sun to rule over the day,  
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- 9 the moon and stars to rule over the night,  
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- 23 It is He who remembered us in our low estate,  
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- 24 and rescued us from our foes,  
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- 25 who gives food to all flesh,  
for His steadfast love endures forever.
- 26 O give thanks to the God of heaven,  
for His steadfast love endures forever. ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry. His books include Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.*

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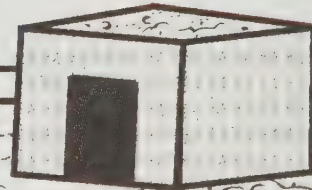
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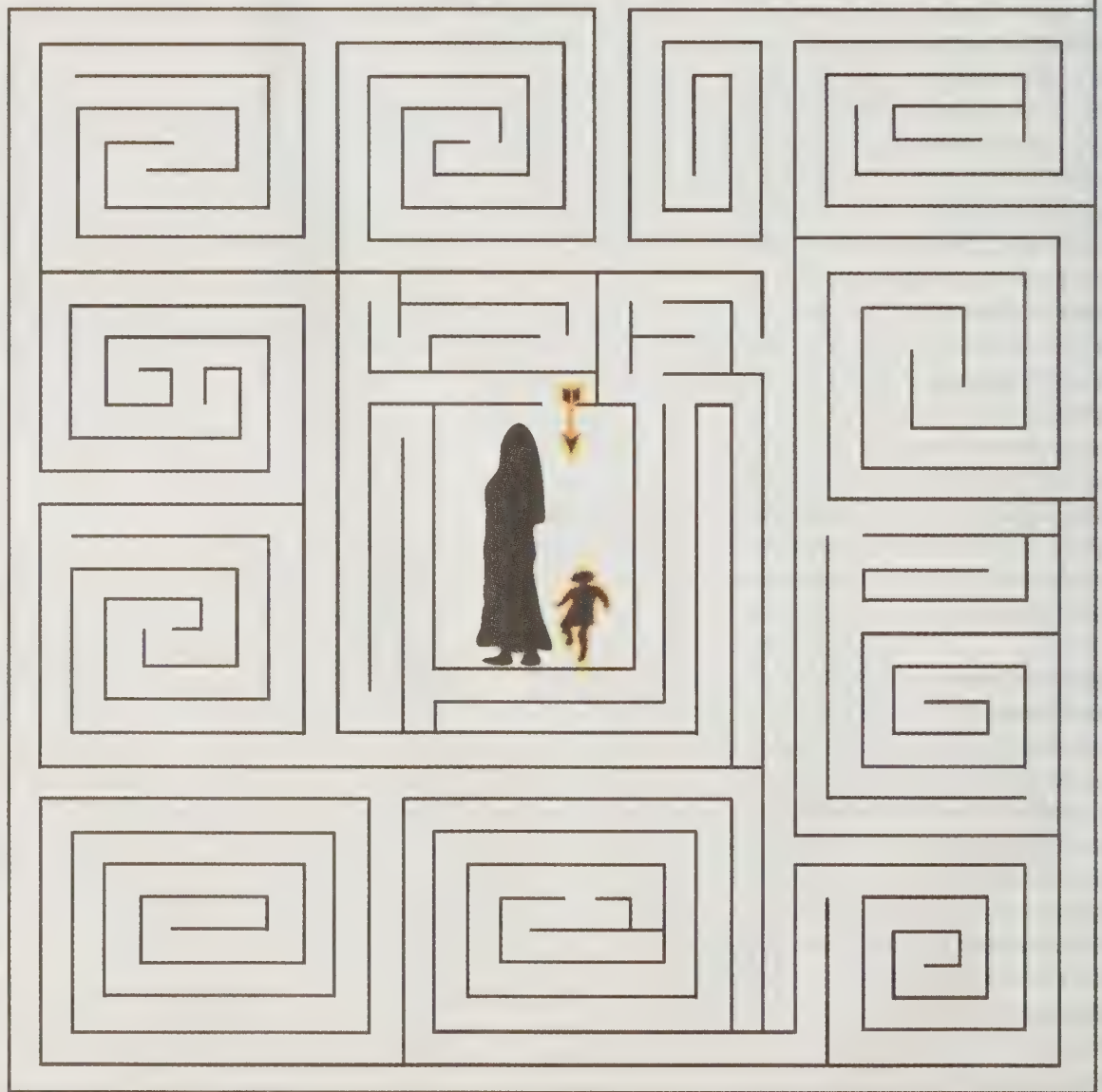


And the star the sages had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were thrilled and excited to see the star. When they went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshiped him. (MATTHEW 2: 9 - 11)

Spirit of God, as the star led the wise ones to Jesus, may the light of Christ shine upon us and show us our way. Amen.



Search inside this house for the child the wise ones are looking for.



enter here

**Epiphany** is the recognition: "I am the light of the world," Jesus said. "Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness."



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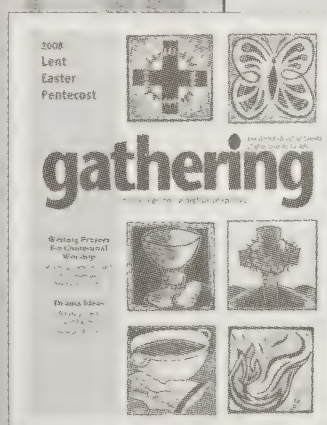
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Vancouver, Chinese Presbyterian Church, Associate Minister, English ministry; Rev. Dr. Ted Sivers; 604-530-2401; [tsivers@lightspeed.ca](mailto:tsivers@lightspeed.ca).

## Obituaries

**JACK**, Rev. James D. C., died on July 11, 2007, in his 87th year. Jim was born in Brantford, Ont., in 1920 to James Hepburn Jack and Annie (Maich) Jack. His one brother, the late David Jack, was a good friend to him throughout his life. Jim graduated from Knox College and was ordained in 1946. That same year he married Mary Winchester and they took up their first work in Hartney, Man. Jim went on to serve at Jubilee, Stayner, Ont., and Zion, Sunnidale Corners, St. Andrew's, Cobourg, Ont., and Leaside, Ont. He retired in 1986 and was named "Minister Emeritus" of Leaside.

During his ministry, Jim was known for his solid preaching and caring pastoral manner. He was chaplain of the 33rd Regiment in Cobourg and the 709 Signals Regiment in Toronto. He served as clerk of the Presbytery of Peterborough and moderator of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston. A generation of Presbyterian ministers knew him as their Greek tutor at Knox College.

Fishing was his great passion. He fished for trout at the family cottage

in Muskoka, in his beloved Algonquin Park and in the streams of southern Ontario. He was a long-time member of the Toronto branch of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society and he performed in several G & S operettas.

Jim is survived by his wife Mary; his children Jim (Lisa), Anne (Robert), Helen (Robert) and Elizabeth (Bruce); 12 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. We remember with gratitude his warmth and his wit and will "carry on as if we knew what we were doing."

**FARIS**, Neil Ronald, was born on May 25, 1920, on a farm near Newmarket, Ont. His ancestors included Selkirk settlers from Kildonan in Scotland who had trekked from Red River to the Scotch Settlement near Bradford in 1819. His great-grandfather, John Faris from County Caven, Ireland, donated the land on which the Auld Kirk was built in the "Settlement."

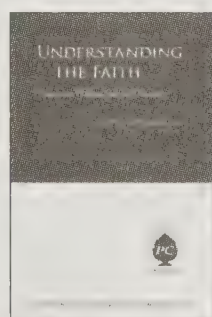
On June 7, 1944, Neil married Alma Elizabeth Longhurst with whom he shared his life for 63 years until he passed away on March 27, 2007. He had varied careers as a farmer, a contractor and a teacher. He was a lifelong and devoted member of the Presbyterian Church and served as an elder in St. Andrew's, Newmarket, Laurel Lea-St. Matthew's, Sarnia and Elmvale Presbyterian. He was a Commissioner to General Assembly in 1957 and was repre-

sentative elder to Barrie Presbytery.

Neil was a man of deep compassion and faith who was always concerned to live the gospel in word and deed. In retirement in the 1990s, he was a member of the board of Presbyterian World Service and Development. He traveled to Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique as an ambassador of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and as a friend to all he met.

Neil was predeceased by his daughter Elizabeth Land. He is survived by his wife Alma, daughter Mary Faris and son Rev. Dr. Robert Faris, and his grandchildren Kathleen, Alison, Kenneth and Richard Land.

**MCMILLAN**, Isobel Islay, most beloved wife of Rev. Dr. Ken McMillan, a teacher, ideal minister's wife and personal consultant, died on Sunday, June 3, 2007. Active in the Women's Missionary Society, Canadian Bible Society and many other church activities, she was married for 64 years and is survived by her husband; daughters Catherine (Andrew McGee) and Barbara (Peter Donaldson); granddaughters Kyla and Sarah; grandsons Regan and Drew; and great-granddaughter Isobel Louise Malcolm. She was loved and admired and is greatly missed by all who knew her. She radiated charm wherever she went. ■



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### New Book Announcement

#### Understanding the Faith: Essays in Philosophical Theology

BY JOSEPH C. McLELLAND

*Understanding the Faith* is a collection of essays in philosophical theology by Canadian theologian and philosopher of religion Joseph C. McLelland spanning his remarkable 50-year association with The Presbyterian College, Montreal. The range and depth of these articles on the nature of Christian ministry, the history of the Reformed tradition, and the state of religion in Canada, provide an important record of a half-century of theological reflection. McLelland's insights on church, academy, and society deserve to be read again and again.

*Understanding the Faith* is the inaugural volume in a new series of publications called Presbyterian College Studies in Theology and Ministry, sponsored by The Presbyterian College, Montreal. The Presbyterian College, founded in 1865, is a seminary of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, a member college of The Montreal School of Theology, and is affiliated with the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University.

JOSEPH C. McLELLAND is J. W. McConnell Professor of Philosophy of Religion Emeritus at McGill University and Robert Professor of History and Philosophy of Religion Emeritus at The Presbyterian College, Montreal. From 1975 to 1985 he also served as Dean of the Faculty of Religious Studies at McGill University.

# Looking Forward

New wineskins must accommodate the new wine of the gospel.

BY REV. DR. J. H. HANS KOUWENBERG



Janus, the Roman god of gates, doors and new beginnings—after which the month of January gets its name—is often portrayed as having two faces, one looking backward and the other looking forward. Christians believe God is the God of the past, the present, and the future (Exod. 3:14a), as well as the God of new beginnings (Rev. 21:5b). Jesus, our Saviour and Lord, portrayed by John as being “the door” by which we enter into new life (Jn. 10:1-10), is also spoken of as being “the same yesterday, today and forever” (Heb. 13:8). It’s helpful to meditate on the faithfulness of God’s mercies through the seasons of life (Lam. 3:21, 22), and the ability of God to bring us into new beginnings through Christ (2 Cor. 5:17-18a) as we observe another transition from the Old to the New Year.

It’s good to look back, to reminisce about the good old times, as well as to recollect the sad events which we may have suffered. Looking back gives perspective. But it’s also important to look forward to the future. New hopes and dreams beckon. New challenges await our active consideration. New wineskins must accommodate the new wine of the gospel (Matt. 9:17).

I have the impression Presbyterians are better at looking backward than

they are at looking forward. It’s easier to go with what we’ve known than to strike out into an uncertain future. Also, history is a fascinating subject. Presbyterians love their history. We even have a Presbyterian museum!

I’ve had the privilege of preaching in services of worship and thanksgiving to God which celebrated a number of congregational anniversaries. Among these, four different congregations have marked 50, 100, 160 and 175 years of history. Much has happened during those years; much has changed; but each of these congregations has borne faithful witness to the faithfulness of God. I’m sure each of them not only want to look backward but also forward, in faith, to their future. Surely all congregations want their future to be as bright as their past. But this will not always be easy.

In his book, *The Future That Has Come*, Kennon L. Callahan reminds us of several major paradigm shifts. We used to think, plan, behave and live as institutions but it’s clear we need to operate as movements. People don’t trust institutions. People want to move forward. We used to focus on the motivations of challenge, reasonability and commitment but we need to share the motivations of compassion, community and hope. These are different values than the values of previous generations.

We used to pay little attention to the discoveries of the universe but today we encourage people to make sense of life in this God-given universe and on this fragile planet earth. Further, we used to have all kinds of long distance “marathon runners” in our congregations and we used to deprecate “sprinters” but today we

also value excellent sprinters. People participate in short sprints; it is difficult to recruit people for the long haul. That means shorter time spans for any series of instruction or study.

We used to be able to count on people to support denominational mission but now we encourage people to participate in mission that is direct and grassroots. Short-term mission trips and local projects will flourish and bear much fruit. We are God’s missionaries together. We used to think we knew what was best for people but now we help people discover their own gifts, creativity and objectives within the larger whole. We used to have a focus on the parts and emphasized an inside-the-church life but now we encourage people to live the whole of life, wherever they may be.

Things are different because the generations have changed. The veteran generation (before 1945), has been superseded by the baby boomer generation (1946-1964), and will soon be superseded by the “baby busters” (1965 on). This means change in the way we do things at church, as well as in our communities.

I’m fortunate to work in a congregation that is aware of these challenges and open to make changes to reach the next generation for Christ. Are the people you work with ready for change? I pray they are. Otherwise we may not have much more history to celebrate or share. Happy New Year! ■

Hans Kouwenberg





Lux Nova, a 40-foot wind tower at Regent College, a non-denominational graduate school of theology at the University of British Columbia, is a new stained glass marvel with solar cells. Woven into its 144-square-foot of photovoltaic glass is The Lord's Prayer in Aramaic. Energy produced by this decorative "luminous column" lights the surrounding park. Sarah Hall, familiar to *Record* readers as a stained-glass artist, designed this art work that produces its own light.







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# PRESBYTERIAN Record

February 2008



Living on the

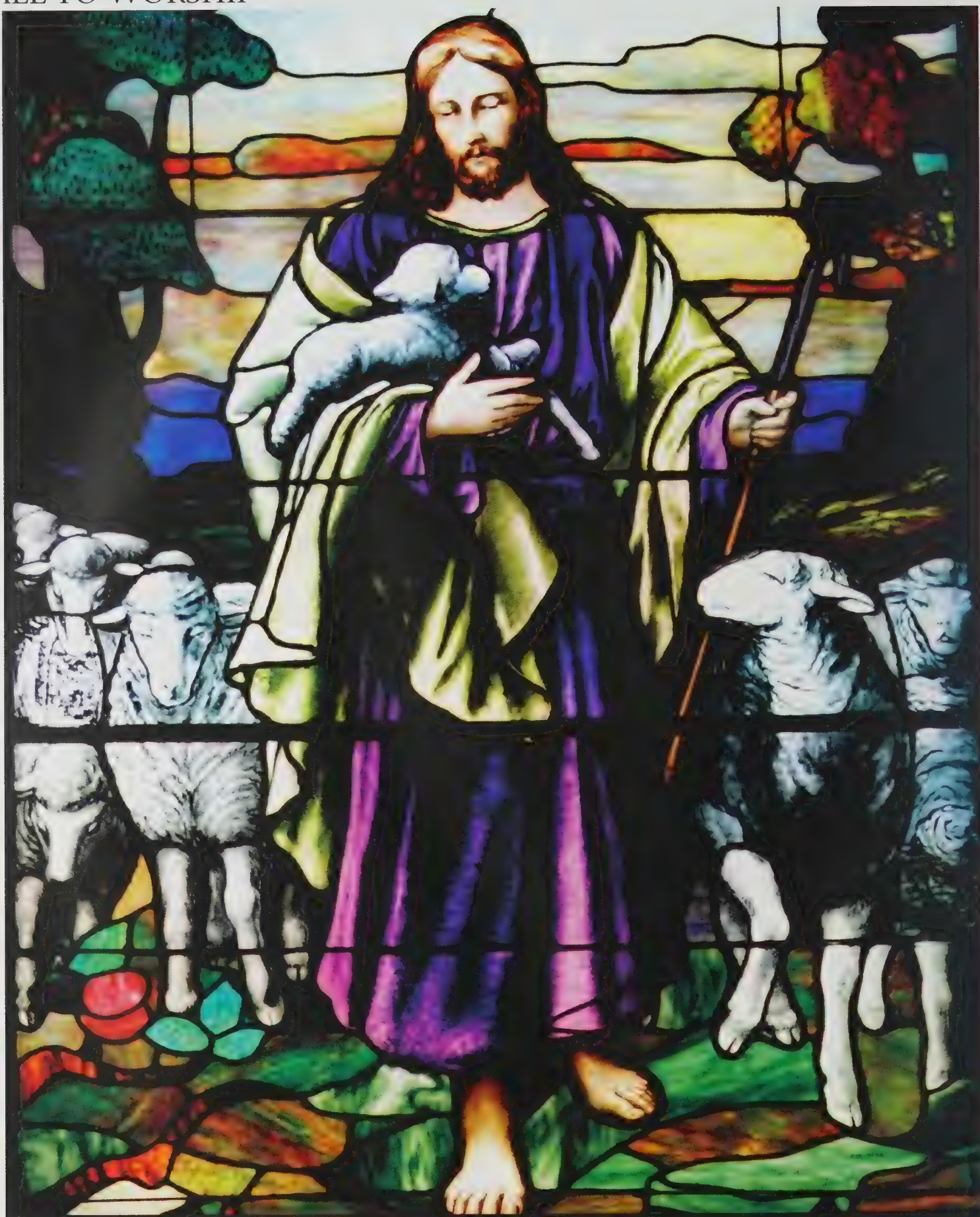
# EDGE

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God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world,  
but that the world through Him might be saved. John 3:17



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# Living on the Edge

Christian missions truly make a difference to Toronto's forgotten.



**On the Cover:**  
photographed by Abel Pandy





# THE CRACKS OF SOCIETY

We who are strong need to offer a helping hand to those who need it. BY DAVID HARRIS

I'll never forget the first time I encountered homeless people begging on the streets. I was a student visiting Rome during an Easter vacation and walking down the Via Del Corso in the heart of the city's shopping district.

Suddenly I found myself facing a row of small children sitting on the sidewalk furiously bending themselves back and forth yelling at the top of their lungs and holding out tins for us to drop some money in.

Old women in rags were also yelling. I was taken aback. Once we had run their gauntlet, a friend explained that the women were mothers and grandmothers yelling at their children to keep begging. The experience exposed the vain urbanity masking the naïveté of growing up in Nova Scotia.

Despite this, my ignorance remained intact insofar as I assumed there were no such problems in my home and native land. That was before we moved to Toronto a dozen years ago. Walking downtown in the winter along Yonge Street meant stepping this way and that to avoid people, young and old, male and female, huddled over subway grates trying to keep warm. It was a pathetic game of hopscotch.

In fact, homeless people are present in many communities but they are drawn to the big cities for the same reasons as everyone else.

The reasons for people living on the streets are many. In Canada it has to do in large part with the closing of mental health institutions beginning in the 1960s. Partly political, partly ideological, the effect was to throw thousands out on the street who were ill-equipped to take care of themselves.

In Toronto alone, the city identified more than 5,000 homeless people in a 2006 survey. In 2002, almost 32,000 people used homeless shelters at least once, including more than 5,000 children.

We are not comfortable with seeing people lying on our streets begging, nor should we be. What is almost as disturbing as the facts is the common underlying belief that somehow it is the fault of street people that they are in their predicament.

That is willful naïveté. If living on the streets and begging were so easy, more of us would be doing it. The truth is that many people have mental illnesses that are undiagnosed or difficult to treat. Drug addicts are often effectively self-



medicating. Prostitutes are most frequently the victims of an abusive childhood.

Besides those whose troubles are rarely of their own making, our cities are seeing more and more refugees and "illegal" immigrants fleeing their homes in dangerous ways to come to the relative safety and presumed prosperity of Canada. In Toronto alone, people involved in street ministries estimate several hundred such people are smuggled into the country each year and dumped on a street corner with nothing except wholly

inadequate clothes, speaking neither English nor French.

What are we to do? At least three things.

Firstly, we need to hold these people in our prayers. I don't mean asking God for miracles. Prayers help keep people and situations in the front of our minds. By mentioning the homeless, the mentally ill, the addicts and the abused in our private prayers as well as public prayers in church, we are less inclined to forget them and their needs.

Secondly, we need to support generously the ministries in our communities and church that provide food, shelter and counselling. Some of these ministries in Toronto are the focus of photographer Abel Pandy's lens in our cover feature.

Make it a Lenten practice of giving any person asking for money the loonies and toonies that accumulate in your pocket. They are as much in need of a coffee as we are.

Thirdly, we need to remember our prayers when we are voting for whatever level of government to support housing and health care policies to take care of those who have otherwise slipped through the cracks of society.

They are children of God as much as we are and we who are strong need to offer a warm, strong helping hand.

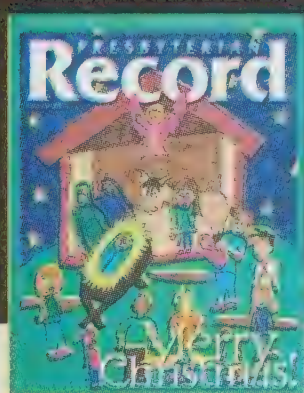
A warm note of appreciation to our donors who supported the *Record's* 2007 Appeal. We received more than \$100,000, which is not only a tremendous sign of support for the magazine but will enable us to bring you more in-depth stories from our award-winning team. Thank you!

David Harris



# Letters

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## PRESBYTERIAN Record

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## Rogers refuted

The review of Jack Rogers' book on homosexuality (June, 2007) unfortunately adds to the confusion on this matter in the church at large. Prof. Robert Gagnon of Pittsburgh (Presbyterian) Theological Seminary has refuted every major exegetical and theological claim made by Rogers in his monumental work *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics*; and also in his detailed critique of Rogers at [robgagnon.net/articles/RogersUse-Analogies.pdf](http://robgagnon.net/articles/RogersUse-Analogies.pdf)

It troubles me that the *Record* continues to stoke the flames of this debate by giving prominence to books like Rogers', which are theologically and exegetically flawed.

I studied under Jack Rogers at Fuller Seminary years ago, and even then he was moving toward a liberal theological agenda. His leftward pilgrimage is disappointing but not unexpected to many of us who have known him.

REV. DR. J. KEVIN LIVINGSTON, TORONTO

## Faiz misspoke

I'm a bit startled by Andrew Faiz's January column, *Jesus Good*. I thought I should clarify some points.

I think it is misleading to suggest that my book *The End of Religion* offers a message that "isn't that far" from that of Hitchens or Spong. I see both of them, in different ways, throwing the baby (of the biblical/historical Jesus) out with the dirty water (of religious failure). My book targets the same people who might pick up a book by Hitchens or Spong, but with the hope of rekindling their interest in the Jesus of Scripture. Our job as Christ-

followers is to continually submit our personal lives and our corporate lives to the Lordship of Jesus—something that will include submitting even our current structures and traditions to Scriptural teaching.

And Faiz misspoke to say that The Meeting House, where I am the teaching pastor, is "non-denominational." The Meeting House is an evangelistic church-plant of the Brethren In Christ and we continue to be very grateful to have their support, blessing and accountability.

BRUXY CAVEY, OAKVILLE, ONTARIO

## Andrew Faiz responds:

Your comments are fair; but I'll still do my best to defend myself from them. I did fail to check the denominational link to The Meeting House. My apologies for that oversight.

In our current cultural landscape—which is the focus on my column—religion is under attack. (And between you and me, justifiably—and if people like you and me start saying that out too loud, then, well, who needs enemies?) Your book, therefore, is one more voice addressing the same cultural malaise; though with a decidedly Jesus-centred response.

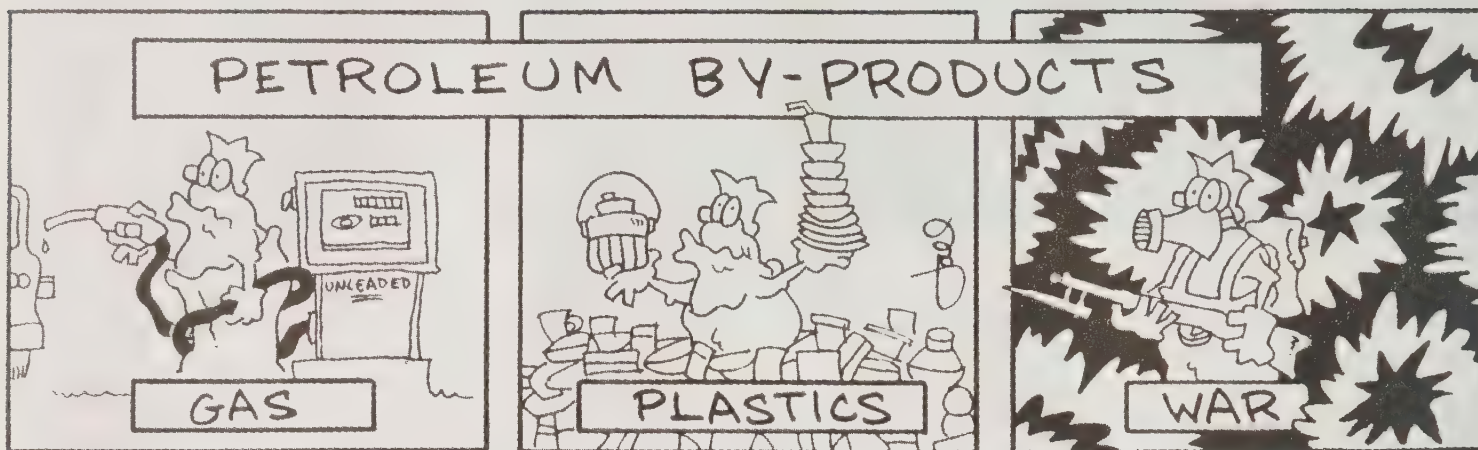
## January Good

I particularly enjoyed reading the articles in the January issue—something for everyone. Among the articles I found most interesting was the feature on Rick Warren, Chuck Congram's take on relationships, the informative Presby-Assyrians and the funny piece on a Canadian comic in New York. I even found it interesting to look up the

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## Pontius' Puddle



meaning of "zeitgeist," which made Andrew Faiz's treatise *Jesus Good*, dealing with acceptance/love of all people, understandable and interesting. Now to find out about the on-line program *Opening the Doors to Discipleship* as advertised on the back cover.

CAL WITHERS, LONDON, ONT.

### Rhetorical pinpricks

*Re Secular Militants, November*

Theists have a much better case than atheists for explaining such things as the origin of the universe, the fine-tuning of physical constants that make life possible, the origin of biological information in DNA, the objectivity of morality, the existence of human consciousness and rationality and the existence of non-utilitarian value (such as self-sacrificial love), just to name a few. And, as a Christian theist, allow me to also add the resurrection of Jesus.

John McTavish is correct in pointing out that the atheist's trump card, the problem of evil, itself presupposes the existence of God. If there is no absolute standard of goodness, i.e., God, then evil is simply a bunch of stuff "the atheist doesn't happen to like."

These books fail to do the hard work of engaging the theistic arguments of contemporary theologians and philosophers such as N.T. Wright and Alvin Plantinga. If they did, they might be more circumspect and somewhat less vociferous in their opinions. In the meantime, I think Chris-

tians, at least, can endure the rhetorical pinpricks from this recent spate of skeptical attacks on our faith.

DENNIS KIM, COQUITLAM, B.C.

It has been my experience that if you delve beneath the hard exterior of most atheists you will find a one-time believer. The person has suffered a deep spiritual wound and they have turned upon God. They see the deep hurt as God lashing out at them. They are fighting back against this insensitive God.

In their incessant denial of God they are picking at the scab covering their wound. The more vicious their denial of God the deeper was their faith. How else could anyone be convincing in this tirade of hate.

MARY WILTON, OSHAWA, ONT.

### Learn war no more

I was disappointed in the Christmas message from the editor. It reminded me of warnings about political writing from George Orwell in his essay, *Politics and the English Language*: "Defenseless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification." Similarly, Harris indicates that Canadian military intervention in Afghanistan creates "possibilities for peace" and that "peace is a messy business."

Harris omitted an essential component of a Christmas message from a

Presbyterian publication: the prophetic tradition. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

ROBERTA W. LEE, SAINT JOHN, N.B.

*Re A Call For Peace, October News*

How could the PCC justify negotiating with a group of thugs and terrorists such as the Taliban who stand against everything not only Presbyterians, but Canadians as a nation believe: Freedom of religion, speech, education for all and equal opportunity for women.

We are faithfully engaged when our democratically elected government lived up to our international obligations by engaging the Taliban in their efforts to impose their morally corrupt system on a downtrodden and helpless nation.

Our troops are not only fighting, they are assisting the people of Afghanistan to better their lives and arrive at a point where they are the sole masters of their own country. One in which they can know true democracy and the feeling of living in peace not fear.

JOHN E. MOORS LT. COL. RETD., BELLEVILLE, ONT.

### Calling on the west

We have subscribed to your publication for a few years now and enjoy the great articles on what our wonderful church is doing world wide and locally here in Canada. But we wonder why there is very little written with regards to western Canada, mainly the prairies.







# People & Places

For more People & Places submissions, please visit our website:  
[www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)



Cake-cutting of the month: Rev. Hans Kouwenberg helped West Flamboro, Dundas, Ont., celebrate their 175th anniversary. Along the way he gave the recently ordained Rev. Stephen Jenvey a few pointers on how to cut a cake. Do not try this at home, please; these men are professionals.



People and Places is really about transitions; some of which are hard, some welcomed. St. Andrew's, Newmarket, Ont., has a great story to tell, and the details of it are on our website. The short version is about paying for renovations and an extension that began in 1992. Last November the congregation burned the mortgage papers. From left: John Hopkins, chair facilities committee with George Smith, clerk of session; in the background from left, former minister Rev. Angus McGillivray, Kathleen McGillivray, Irene Howard, Marg Rawson and Elizabeth Sharpe.



Nov. 11, 2007 saw veterans from World War II and the Korean War gather at Comox Valley, Comox, on Vancouver Island, to participate in a Remembrance Day ceremony as part of the regular service. Pictured are: Gordon Johnson, (WW II) Jean Thomas (WW II) , Garry Johnson (Korea), Jack Morrison, Bill Murray, Lloyd Kuhn, Art Rowlandson and Hal Hicks.





Rev. Sam Priestly may have retired from St. Andrew's, Markham, Ont., in October but he's forever on the map. Flanking him at his farewell reception are Markham city councillor John Webster, left, and York regional councillor Jack Heath.

First, Nelson, B.C., has seen some hard times in recent years—a phase in the life of every church. But, they've picked themselves up, dusted themselves off and with a little help from the Presbytery of Kootenay they began anew in November. From left: Eileen Welsh, Rev. Don Lindsay, Susan Lindsay, John Stack, Betty McCrae.

## Had cake lately?

See [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca) for instructions on how to submit to People and Places.

## Also on our website:

The WMS in Sooke; anniversaries and citations in Bedford, Brantford and Bracebridge; magnificent cakes in Guelph and New Westminster; a very active youth group in Pickering; and something's burning in Sylvan Lake.





Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg, Moderator of the 133rd General Assembly, met with Prime Minister Stephen Harper last December. Ed Fast, (middle) Member of Parliament for Abbotsford, B.C., facilitated the meeting.

# Poverty Tops Agenda

MODERATOR REV. HANS KOUWENBERG spoke with Prime Minister Stephen Harper about poverty and First Nations' issues in Ottawa last December. Kouwenberg delivered a church leaders' letter on poverty that was signed by all members of the Canadian Council of Churches.

Kouwenberg said he felt the Prime Minister was open to discussing some of the items which are of deep concern to the church.

The two also discussed the forthcoming apology that the government has said it will offer to First Nations people concerning Indian residential schools.

"I pointed out to him that this

apology should not be understood as bringing about any sense of closure as was mentioned in the throne speech, but rather as a renewal in a pledge to walk together with First Nations people in new paths of healing and reconciliation."

Kouwenberg also mentioned the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a joint government and church initiative where stories of residential schools will be voiced and shared, and the renewal of the Covenant to Walk Together that national church leaders attended in Winnipeg last summer and the upcoming church and aboriginal leaders' tour that is to take place in March. He invited

Harper, whose mother currently attends Westminster Presbyterian in Calgary, to bless the beginning of this tour in Ottawa.

"Although he did not commit to attend this event, he told me would not be issuing the government's apology until the people who were going to be appointed to this tour were in place," said Kouwenberg. "He hoped this would be before March, and indicated his government was committed to this process."

During the meeting, Kouwenberg was presented with a certificate of congratulations on his appointment as Moderator of the 133rd General Assembly. ■ —AM



# Reformed bodies unite

## WCRC will represent 80 million Christians

IN A MOVE that "shows the churches coming together," the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council have agreed to unite. The October decision means the new global body will represent more than 80 million Reformed Christians in more than 100 million countries.

"This is a historic moment," said WARC general secretary Setri Nyomi in a press release. "The Reformed family has demonstrated that we have the ability to engage together in a united fellowship and overcome divisions—and for this we are thankful to God."

WARC has proposed that the new group be named the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The WARC Executive Committee defines "communion" as, "an expression of our being together in the body of Christ as we move towards that oneness which is the gift and calling of God, fully expressed in the Trinity."

The key callings of the new Reformed body will be:

- to foster Reformed confessional identity and communion among Reformed churches, and unity in the whole church;
- to promote justice, and to work for peace and reconciliation in the world;
- to encourage the renewal of Reformed worship and spiritual life;
- to strengthen leadership development and the nurturing of the covenant community;

- to promote the full participation of women and youth in all aspects of the church's life;
- to renew a passion among Reformed Christians for God's mission in a spirit of partnership and unity;
- to interpret Reformed theology for contemporary witness and for the unity of the church.

Rev. Stephen Kendall, principal clerk of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, is a member of the merger implementation task force, as well as the chair of WARC's finance committee. He attended WARC's executive council in Trinidad where the union decision was made. The task force will be responsible for a constitution, budget, staffing and structure details, the Uniting General Council in 2010 in Grand Rapids, MI, as well as fundraising and communication plans.

"This will be an expression of the unity within the Reformed church," Kendall told the *Record*. "Often Reformed churches point out their divisions," he said, noting that REC member churches traditionally come from a more conservative background than those in WARC, "but this shows the churches coming together."

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has been a part of WARC since its inception in 1970, and Kendall said he hopes the PCC can have some involvement in hosting the 2010 General Council in Michigan. ■—AM with files from WARC

# Moderator on YouTube

YOUTUBE, the online video sharing site, has added another Presbyterian minister to its library. Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg has entered the realm of multimedia with a sermon he gave at Knox College last November. The sermon runs in three parts and was about modeling ministry, based on Mark 7: 31-37.

A second sermon, given at Rosedale, Toronto, may eventually be added. To listen to the Knox College sermon, visit [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and type "Hans Kouwenberg" in the search field. YouTube also features sermons by Rev. Mark Lewis, minister at St. Andrew's, Kitchener, Ont. ■—AM

## BUILDING HOPE

**Dictionary.com defines mortgage, loan and debt in the following way:**

**mort-gage** — noun

■ a conveyance of an interest in property as security for the repayment of money borrowed

**loan** — noun

■ something lent on condition of being returned, a sum of money lent at interest

**debt** — noun

■ a liability or obligation to pay or render something

No matter how you define money owed, the sum of \$200,000 is needed to pay off loans/mortgages/debts at Anishinabe Place of Hope. Each monthly repayment of \$800 is an amount of money that cannot go into programming. Can you imagine the benefit to our Programs if \$800 per month was suddenly available?



**WICM**

**Can you help? If 1000 Presbyterians were to donate \$200 each, the debt on this new building would suddenly disappear.** From that moment forward, all dollars raised would support the people who need it most — disadvantaged inner city children, families and individuals.

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Norman Paterson



# A Remarkable Man

Norman Paterson's legacy lives on in the church. BY ALAN M. MCPHERSON

OF ALL THE SERMONS he delivered in his long career at St. Andrew's, Ottawa, (from 1943 to 1960), Rev. Dr. A. Ian Burnett may have made his greatest impact with one from 1950. Sitting in his usual pew listening to the noted preacher was Senator Norman McLeod Paterson.

Burnett expressed his concern about the spread of the gospel, and he cast that concern in a specific context. Although he was comfortable enough, he said, many of his colleagues existed on only the minimum stipend, then \$2,000 a year. His concern was that many minis-

ters might be worn down in their task of living and proclaiming the gospel because of the very real worries they faced as they scrimped and patched, raising families on barely \$40 a week.

Norman Paterson listened and decided to act. He had prospered and he would share those blessings. He created a fund for those struggling ministers, to which he would contribute \$1 million, in \$25,000 increments. That would be enough to pay 500 ministers on minimum stipend. An equivalent amount today would be almost \$16 million. He continued to give even after

**He had prospered.  
God had blessed the work  
of his hands and mind**

the million-dollar mark was reached.

Two particular stipulations were important to Paterson. One was that the money be used to help married ministers with children. Those, of course, were the days when all ministers were male, fewer women worked outside the home and most parishioners would have been appalled to hear that their minister's wife had gone to work. The other was that the fund be anonymous. His name should not be used or known. It was not until after his death in 1983 that his family gave their consent to the fund being renamed the Norman M. Paterson Fund for Ministerial Assistance.

Times have changed, of course. Not all ministers are men. Many spouses do work outside the home. The fund committee has moved with the times but still seeks to fulfill the main intent of Paterson's generosity. As well as "married ministers," the terms have been broadened to include divorced or separated ministers who have financial responsibility for their children. To keep a level playing field, and recognizing that working spouses contribute financially, the qualifying limit has been adjusted to "household income not exceeding \$10,000 above the minimum stipend."

In more than 55 years of operation, the fund has reached hundreds of families. But when many congregations are facing financial difficulties, the reality is that (as Gordon Haynes, Associate Secretary for Canada Ministries, who also serves as Secretary of the Fund, once said) "there are many ministers for whom the minimum stipend will be the maximum stipend they ever receive." ■

*Alan McPherson is the retired minister of Central, Hamilton, Ont. A fuller version of this article appears on our website.*



# A Padre in Kandahar

He listens for questions soldiers need to ask.

BY CHARLES DEOGRATIAS

ONE OF THE PRIVILEGES of being a military chaplain is the ability to be present with soldiers in the most dangerous places. We visit them regularly and sometimes we stay with them. We listen to them trying to make sense of the senseless by asking real and deep questions. One soldier recently asked me: "Padre, I just killed two Taliban last night. What do you think God thinks about me?" I paused for a moment and thought about the soldier standing before me as a Canadian who is trained to kill but not born to kill. I had the privilege of looking into his eyes. From where we were standing, we could see in the distance children running behind their own house playing. I pointed at them and told the soldier that those children could not be playing if he was not there protecting them.

It was important to note to the soldier, as a way of reminder, that

Canadian servicemen and women are not the target in this war, they are just the scapegoat. The real target in this war is the Afghan people. The soldier asked the question because he thought he was not good anymore, having killed, which is against human decency. He thanked me for giving him another way of looking at himself. I told the soldier that it was not important to thank me. But rather it was important that he asked the question the day after he killed the two Taliban and not two years later. This is but a small taste of what we experience and hopefully it gives a sense of what Canadians are doing here in Afghanistan. As a Presbyterian chaplain, I want to thank all Presbyterians for praying for

the troops who are our heroes, as they continue to bring hope to the people of Afghanistan. Please continue to pray for us until our work is done. ■

*Padre Charles Deogratias, originally from Rwanda, is a graduate of Knox College, Toronto, and currently a military chaplain posted in Afghanistan.*



## Presbyterians Fast to Help End Hunger

THREE LEADING PRESBYTERIANS participated in a one-day fast led by Canadian Foodgrains Bank, along with leaders from other denominations and agencies to help draw attention to ending world hunger.

"This fast serves as a witness to Canada and to the world," said Rev. Rick Fee, General Secretary of the PCC's Life and Mission Agency, in a press release. "Hunger must end. It is not acceptable that there are still over 800 million people in the world without sufficient food to eat."

Fee, who is also the chair of CFGB's

board of directors, fasted on Nov. 28 along with fellow Presbyterians Rev. Stephen Kendall, Principal Clerk, and Kenneth Kim, Executive Director of Presbyterian World Service and Development.

Fee told the *Record* the CFGB Board met about a week after the event to discuss "how the world food supply system is particularly strained right now, how the meteoric rise of China and India is affecting food production and distribution, and the shifting of corn into ethanol production rather than for human consumption and what this is

doing to food supply around the world."

In addition to spending the day in fasting and prayer, the church leaders added their names to a letter which was sent to Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The letter encourages the federal government to strengthen its efforts to reduce and end hunger.

The day also launched a new CFGB program called End Hunger Fast. It is hoped that this program will provide a meaningful way for Canadians to get involved in the work of ending hunger in whatever way they can. To learn more, visit [www.endhungerfast.com](http://www.endhungerfast.com) ■



# Meet the Moderator Nominees

Education, leadership and diversity keys to church's future. BY AMY MACLACHLAN



Rev. Thomas Kay



Rev. Cheol Soon Park

TWO NAMES WILL APPEAR on the ballot for Moderator of the 2008 General Assembly, both immigrants from two very Presbyterian countries: Rev. Thomas Kay of Knox, Guelph, Ont., from Scotland, and Rev. Cheol Soon Park, of Toronto Korean, from Korea. The new moderator will be officially voted in at the assembly to be held in Ottawa in June.

**Rev. Thomas Kay** has served in five charges in P.E.I., Nova Scotia, and Ontario; has been clerk and moderator of six presbyteries and has served on the Fund for Ministerial Assistance, the Committee for Theological Education, and on the General Assembly's Committee on Business. He has been active in camping ministries, was a lecturer in church polity at Knox College, was chaplain of the Essex and Kent Scottish Regiment, and helped establish CORE, a group coordinating the social action ministries of churches in Guelph. He is married to Cathy, a minister at Knox, Crieff, Ont. They have three adult

children in university.

"There are many challenges facing the PCC today, not least are issues of identity, theological and social relevance, and denominational vitality. Some of those issues have been highlighted in debate around the departure of the minister and many members of the congregation of Trinity, Oro. Out of that sad situation, however, has come a reminder of the PCC's greatest strength—its individual congregations. With more emphasis on supporting and encouraging the vitality of congregations, denominational vitality can take care of itself.

"An essential element of congregational vitality is education in the faith. When individual members are engaged in faith formation ministries, the life of the whole congregation benefits. If, by God's grace, the church calls me as moderator, I would hope to focus renewed energy and attention on educational ministries at all levels—from the local Sunday school to the education of future ministers in our schools of theology."

**Rev. Cheol Soon Park** is the son of a Presbyterian minister, and graduate of Knox College. Prior to Toronto Korean (1,500 members) he was minister at Kitchener-Waterloo Korean. Park has served on the Committee on Church Doctrine, the Evangelism Committee, the Centre for Asian-Canadian Theology and Ministry at Knox College, the Board of Governors of Knox College, and as the clerk of the Presbytery of Eastern Han-Ca. Park has been married to Karen for 25 years and they have three children.

"I think we have been in survival mode for so long that we have become quite comfortable with it. The church's future depends on the leadership of the church. We should look back to realize what has been missing in the life of the PCC. And we should look around to see what is available to improve the situation

**"I think we have been in survival mode for so long that we have become quite comfortable with it"**

and to get the energy back to the local congregation. Reflection may be a luxury for us. Concrete action is a mandate.

"I'd like to focus on the globalization of our understanding. We need to open our eyes to realize what is going on in Canada as well as abroad. When we become truly open regardless of ethnicity, colour, gender and heritage, we will be able to serve and win the world to our Lord.

"The local church should be a place that makes a joyful noise and wakes up people's heart and minds. In order to achieve it, renewal of leadership is a pre-requisite." ■



# Council Plans for Diversity

Aboriginal issues also get attention. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

THE ASSEMBLY COUNCIL met in November, and Aboriginal issues were discussed in various ways. Lisbeth Duncan, convener, and former moderator Wilma Welsh reported on a trip to the Medicine Eagle Retreat and Healing Place in Manitoba. They were invited along with the PCC's Healing and Reconciliation Animator, Lori Ransom, and staff from Winnipeg Inner City Mission, to talk, forge friendships, and learn about life on the reserve.

## Ethics and racial diversity will be highlighted in any future hiring of national staff

Laura Robinson, a journalist who has reported on Aboriginal issues for 17 years, presented her short film, *Front Runners*. The movie chronicles the lives of two boys who attended Birtle Residential School (a PCC school that was located in Manitoba), and their experiences on the school's famed running team. Council agreed to officially endorse the film.

It was also noted that as General Assembly decided in 2006, funds saved from the church's reduced liability cap (from \$2.1 to 1.32 million) from the now-finalized residential schools settlement will be used for healing and reconciliation purposes.

The long-range planning committee presented its interim plans for a new church vision. "Meaningful Mission and Ministry for Today and Tomorrow" will be the overarching topic at about 15 three-day meetings to be held among variously grouped presbyteries, in consultation with synod executives, led by a to-be-hired staff person. Information gathered will help create a vision for the work of the church. The process is expected to take about 12 to 18 months and will be supported by about \$200,000 already set aside from undesignated bequests.

### Other business included:

The finance committee decided to grant Trinity, Oro, a bridging loan of just over \$236,000 that will be used to retire the mortgage on its building with Royal Bank. The first two years of the loan will be interest-free, and the loan is expected to be paid in full in five years.

The Vine Helpline is the official name of the new two-year pilot project that brings together the departments of Worship and Evangelism, Education in Faith, and Ministry with Children and Youth. The program launched in early 2008, and will operate through staff, volunteers, and leadership.

The Policy on Racial Harassment and Racial Diversity was further revised. A vision was adopted to signal the PCC's future directions toward racial and ethnic diversity at the national level of leadership in the church. Ethnic and racial diversity will be highlighted in any future hiring of national staff, appointments to presbytery committees and boards, recommendations

to national standing committees, and the selection of candidates for presbytery and synod staff positions and committees.

Three new Mission Priority Funds have been created and will be handled by the Planned Giving office. Though monies will come from undesignated bequests (up to a maximum of \$1 million per fund), it is hoped that individual donors will contribute. The three funds are: Creative Children and Youth Ministries, Mission Connections, and New Church Development Assistance Fund.

Discussions about creating a moderatorial stole, the prospect of which had been sent to the Assembly Council executive at last year's General Assembly, will cease. The executive noted that "recognizing that it has been before the church for a number of years, and has caused considerable debate and even some concern ... this may not be the time to move in this direction." ■



## CONTINUING EDUCATION at KNOX COLLEGE

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Dean of Duke Chapel, Duke University

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## Making amends

ENI—Brazilian Cardinal Claudio Hummes, prefect of the Congregation of the Clergy, asked Roman Catholics worldwide, in the Vatican-based *Osservatore Romano* newspaper, to engage in prayer to make amends for the actions of pedophile priests and to help their victims. The prayers should take the form of the “perpetual adoration” of the Eucharist, where members of the church take turns to maintain a vigil in front of a consecrated host representing the body of Jesus.

Cardinal Hummes said there had always been scandals involving clergy in the Catholic Church, but that “they had blown up in recent times with heavy consequences.” Still, Hummes said, “the great majority of the clergy has nothing to do with such scandals.”

## The Christian Allah

ENI—The Christian Federation of Malaysia expressed “deep disappointment and regret” at the government announcement that only Muslims were allowed to use the word ‘Allah.’ The Government said the word ‘Allah’ referred only to the Muslim God and that non-Muslims were banned from using the expression.

Bishop Paul Tan Chee Ing, a Jesuit cleric and head of the Malaysian Christian Federation responded in a statement: “The word

‘Allah’ is a pre-Islamic word used by Arab Christians before Islam came into being.

About 60 percent of Malaysia’s 25 million people are Muslims. Christians and Buddhists, who are mostly from the country’s minority Chinese community, make up about 28 percent of the population and Hindus of Indian origin make up about 10 percent.

## Elections and violence

ENI—“We are appealing to our churches to donate food, clothes and other essential supplies and gather them in their respective parishes,” Anglican Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi said in early January after violence erupted following a disputed election in Kenya.

Religious groups held national prayers for peace at Sunday services on January 6. Churches had in preceding days joined other relief agencies in drumming up aid for as many as 250,000 people, United Nations agencies said. Some of those displaced were camping in church grounds or near police stations.

“We can try as ordinary Kenyans to pray and preach peace amongst ourselves, but if there is no word from [political leaders] Kibaki and Raila, then anarchy and destruction will persist,” said Catholic Bishop Peter Kairo of the Eldoret diocese.

A convoy of 20 World Food Programme trucks arrived in Nairobi and Eldoret in early January targeting the people displaced by the violence. The Red Cross Society is appealing for aid for people living with HIV who are thought to be especially vulnerable.

## Indulgence encourages tourism

ENI—Pope Benedict XVI has authorized a special plenary indulgence to encourage “renewed holiness” for Catholics who make a pilgrimage to Lourdes, the famous religious site in southern France, within a year of December 8, 2007.

A spokesperson for Tangney Tours in Kent, England said, “We expect a bumper year to Lourdes in 2008,” while a manager from Pax Travel in London said, “We think numbers will rise substantially in 2008 but I haven’t heard what the Pope says about indulgences.”

The Pope is expected this year to visit

the shrine where Mary is said to have appeared to a 14-year old shepherdess, Bernadette Soubirous in 1858.

## Bee like Jesus

ENI—A national campaign using Internet and television advertisements sponsored by several denominations aims to renew public interest in Christianity, says the Australian Bible Society.

The Roman Catholic Church’s campaign began in December, with 15-second advertisements screened alongside *Bee Movie* and *Atonement*.

Churches that participate in the campaign host events for their local community under the “Jesus—All about Life” banner.

The campaign is based on research showing that many Australians are not interested in organized religion but still respect Jesus and his teachings. The advertisements target people at stages in their lives where they are often more open to evangelism.

A YouTube clip directed at new parents features a young mother, who comments, “You can take or leave religion, but I can’t get away from the fact that a lot of what Jesus said makes sense.”

## The Ebola distance

ENI—Religious leaders in Uganda are backing government efforts in fighting Ebola by discouraging followers from shaking hands or embracing during greeting. “These are precautionary measures. The general advice in churches is: don’t shake hands; don’t embrace,” said Rev. Grace Kaiso, executive secretary of the Uganda Joint Christian Council, a grouping that brings together Roman Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox churches.

Ebola is a disease that is manifested through a very high fever, diarrhea, vomiting, red eyes and a rash. It is named after a river in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The World Health Organization says it was discovered in the DRC after two epidemics in 1976. It spreads through close contact with body fluids of the infected person or bodies of those who have died. There is no specific treatment or vaccine known for Ebola. ■



# The Not-So-Good News

Thanks to the monks, religion news wasn't all about sex and money. BY ANDREW FAIZ

Remember the Buddhist monks last year, leading anti-government demonstrations in the land now called Myanmar. The Religion Newswriters Association (there's an association for everything!) named them the "top religion newsmakers of 2007."

There was heavy competition for the title, as you can imagine, from the usual sources: electioneering Democrats and Republicans going after the evangelical cash, um, support. That story is only going to get hotter this year as Americans drag themselves to an election. That's always a good time—keep posted to late night television.

Homosexuals in the church is always big news. Some like them homosexuals, some don't; some elevate them to high positions, some bury them. Some marry them, some don't. Some take the American military approach: don't ask, don't tell.

This for me was the lowest point in 2007: Rowan Williams, the Anglican AbC, passed through Toronto. He was interviewed on *The Current*, a CBC Radio show on weekday mornings. The only issue raised by the interviewer of the second most religious Christian leader in the world was about sexuality—about gays and lesbians. According to the CBC, I felt, that's all Christianity is!

A world turned upside down, social and cultural injustice all over, and religious-minded folks, good Christian stock, digging deep paying for and working on mission projects in every obscure corner of the planet. But, that's not news, not according to our national broadcaster. Of course, I don't blame the CBC for this. Churches, including, perhaps even particularly, ours, are notoriously shy about sharing any good news, leave alone the Good News. We're comfortable in our smug insularity. Therefore others easily reduce our story.

Sex dominates religion news in others ways—abuse by clerics of young boys and girls. That story isn't going away either. Not for a while. American Catholics had to put out \$2.1 billionUS; which included \$660 millionUS from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

Money talks, I suppose. And I hope somebody is listening. The abuse was engendered by the supercilious culture of the church. That same culture—where the needs

and the public relations of the institution are more important than Christ or His message—encouraged the horrible abuse of several generations of Aboriginal Canadians. That story—which trickled along last year, as it will this year—also was reduced to money.

Sex and money, I suppose, are the constant top religion stories. In fact, I would think most of us have our antennas attuned to that rhythm. We go to church but we compartmentalize ourselves from these issues. We pretend they're either overwrought, or don't pertain to our local congregation, or we just block them out. I should think that is a big story in religion circles—why people keep giving when their faith, their religion and the institutions that serve both are constantly under attack.

On the adjoining page you'll see that the Pope has asked for prayers for abuse victims. That's wonderful; though I suppose it could also fall into the category of too-little-too-late. I hope not. Curiously enough—don't know if you've noticed—churches are slow at saying sorry.

Also on that page you'll see how the Australians have started an ad campaign. All can be reversed with a little spin, I suppose. Apology and evangelism—another well worn path for churches.

And so it was nice to see those bloodied monks trying to chant past the brutal Burmese guards. That was faith-in-action stuff. It was nice to see clerics, religious leaders, get their hands dirty. It was nice to see them not wringing their hands or washing their hands. It was really nice to see them being on the right side of a cause.

If those young men were our religious leaders, well, we wouldn't need to compartmentalize, would we? We wouldn't need to spin or apologize, wouldn't have to be smug or insular, wouldn't have to hide our light, pretend we don't exist, or be quietly frustrated by CBC shows.

Of course, we're lucky we don't live under a mean-spirited regime, as do the Burmese. We're lucky we can vote our way through political change. And, yes, we pray for the monks, who have now been recessed back to their monasteries.

But for me, within my North American context, it was nice to see them out there in the streets for a while. ■


Living on the

# EDGE

Christian missions truly make a difference to Toronto's forgotten.

BY AMY MACLACHLAN PHOTOGRAPHY BY ABEL PANDY





"When I went to the shelter,  
I didn't tell my kids  
until into the night that  
we weren't going home"

An abused wife. A drug-addicted teen. A homeless man. A just-arrived immigrant. A troubled child. All of these and many, many more live, sleep, and suffer in Toronto and its outlying areas. Their lives are dotted with difficulty, marred by sorrow, and branded with pain. If you never visit the city, or simply don't know where to look, you might not even know that so many ministries exist to serve these forgotten people. You also mightn't know that a good number of these missions are sponsored in one way or another by devoted Presbyterians hoping to make even a small difference in the lives of others. The missions themselves are making more than a small difference; they are one by one changing the lives of the people who walk through their doors every day. Whether it's offering a warm meal, new toys for a Christmas treat, support and guidance to new Canadians, a bed to sleep on, mentoring and modeling positive behaviour, or resources in a time of crisis, the services offered are crucial and invaluable, and truly follow Christ's call to not only serve the needy, the poor, the sick and the hungry, but to love one another, as He indeed loves us.

## Ana 28, mother of two

### Armagh Housing for Abused Woman


"I have an abusive husband. I've been married about five years. It got bad about six months into it.

Armagh has given me an ability to focus on myself instead of the abuse; to focus on what's good and what's right."

*Ana was at a women's shelter for three months before coming to Armagh in 2006. She is now studying social work.*

Armagh offers second-stage supportive housing and counselling for abused women and their children. It serves about 30 women and 70 children each year. Once it was supported by the PCC through the Board of World Mission. Today, members from the Presbyteries of Brampton and East Toronto and West Toronto sit on its board of directors.





"Mom couldn't accept the way I was growing up. She wanted me in a box"

**Reji** 21, street youth  
Evergreen Centre for Street Youth

"My mom is from the Philippines. I was born there too. We moved here when I was nine. She grew up in a different society. It was different than here.

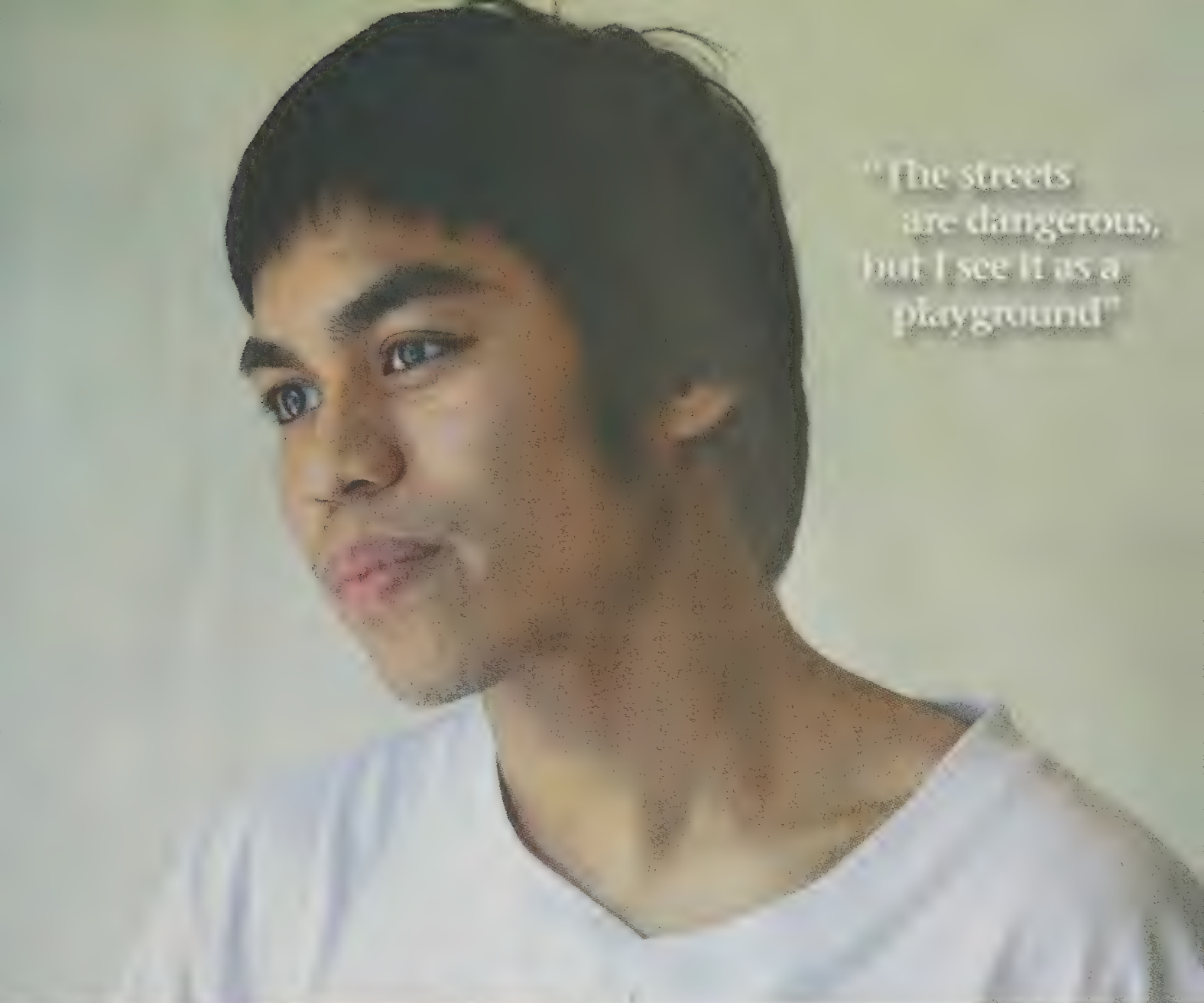
There were too many barriers. I prefer to live life to the fullest.

I went through a lot. I moved out when I was 16. Family problems. I was on the street for three months. Now I'm in a shelter.

I want to own my own business in advertising or computer graphics."

*Reji now works in Evergreen's drop-in centre where he talks to the youth and listens to their problems.*





"The streets  
are dangerous,  
but I see it as a  
playground"

# Pac

21, street youth

Evergreen Centre for Street Youth

"My aunt took me as a baby from my mom, who was into drugs and alcohol. My aunt brought me to Canada, but she abused me. Treated me like a slave. I started running away when I was 10 years old. Children's Aid was called. I became a Crown ward. I ran away a lot. At 18, I left Children's Aid. I figured I could live on my own. I stayed on the streets. At 19 I got my first apartment. I had to grow up quick. I've been through lots.

Then I came here. I fit in here. I've built a family. I enjoy the staff. I love them! They're really good."

*Pac now works at Evergreen, helping other youth find jobs, and get their lives back on track.*



"I have seen the  
extent of people  
living at the  
bottom of Toronto"

## Jamal 24, former street youth

Evergreen Centre for Street Youth

"Lots of things led me here. I couldn't trust anybody. I hit bottom. I had nowhere to go. I had no one else, and I found God.

The people I met at Evergreen became my family. You need Jesus. That's all."

*Jamal is a native of Chicago. He now lives with his family in a Toronto suburb, and just began studying at Tyndale University and Seminary. He is also now working at Evergreen.*

Run by Rev. Karen Bach, Evergreen is part of the Yonge Street Mission located in downtown Toronto. They serve about 8,000 youth each year by offering food, clothing, showers, art programs, health care, employment support, housing help, nursery care for children, a lawyer, mental, emotional and addictions counseling, and a safe place where youth can spend time together off the street. They are supported by private donors, churches, corporations and foundations.





**"We used to go  
into the bush and  
drink moonshine.  
When you drink,  
there's lots of action.  
I always wanted  
something"**


**Eleanor** 62, volunteer

Evangel Hall

"At a quarter to three in the morning in 2000, God came to me. Holy mackerel! I heard, 'That's enough!' It was so powerful, but there was a lot of love. That was it. My life changed after that. I had a bet on a knife fight that night. But I never went."

*Eleanor is a committed volunteer at Evangel Hall, helping whenever and wherever she is needed. She even gets called down to the police station to talk and pray with people who have been arrested.*

Established more than 90 years ago by the Presbyterian Church, Evangel Hall recently relocated to a new location and now offers apartments to clients committed to changing their lives. The Hall offers a thrift shop, counselling, advocacy, men, women's and youth programs, health care, Out of the Cold, community dinners, housing assistance, volunteer opportunities, and Sunday worship.



"Women need  
to connect  
with each other.  
We pray for  
one another."

# Juliet

49, single mom

Stonegate Community  
Ecumenical Ministry

"I used to lack confidence in speaking in groups. I used to be uncomfortable. Now I'm learning not to fear, knowing that I won't be judged and that I am accepted for myself."

When I came to Stonegate, I found it fulfilling and inspiring. If you really want to find yourself, this is the place to come."

*Juliet has been attending Stonegate for two years, and was so affected by the women's program that she now helps lead it. She attends St. Andrew's, Streetsville, Ont.*

Located in Etobicoke, Stonegate serves the 11,000 people living in the area's 79 apartment buildings. They offer a second-hand clothing store, volunteer opportunities, counselling, prayer groups, a yearly gospel concert, and community development. They're supported mainly by a family of six churches, including MimicoPresbyterian, who jointly created the ministry in 1991.





"We lived in a ghetto.  
Getting my daughter  
out of there was great"

**Rene** 36, single mother


Scott Mission

"Coming here in the last two years especially, there have been changes in me. Just hearing the message of God helped build my self esteem. I've been on disability since my daughter was two, now I'm trying to get back out there and look for work. "

*As a mother of two, Rene started coming to Scott Mission because of the family camps they offer every summer. She now coordinates Sunday school at her church.*

The Scott Mission was established in 1941 as a non-denominational Christian ministry in downtown Toronto. It now serves men, women, children and families through daily hot meals, emergency groceries, overnight beds, Christmas hampers and toys, low-cost daycare, a clothing bank, after-school programs, immigrant orientation, summer camp, and women's groups. It is supported by individuals, businesses, foundations and government.





"If I didn't come  
here ... I'd be  
in jail or at a  
treatment centre"

## Jesse 16, with Mom

Fernie House Child &  
Youth Services


"I'm getting better at controlling my anger. That's why I got to leave Fernie House.

I went to camp Borden for six weeks last summer. I was up from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. doing drills. I learned a lot. I have a lot of friends now.

Fernie House has made my life straight."

*Jesse lived at Fernie House for 10 months. His learning disabilities and behavioural problems made him lash out violently. He tried to commit suicide in grade 4. He is now back in high school after learning to control his anger and will receive special attention tailored to his needs.*





"My mother said  
it's not because  
I'm bad, but she  
needs a break"

# Kevin 11

Fernie House Child &  
Youth Services

"I've had to learn how to control my anger. I've tried to learn that. But it's hard.

Basketball is my favourite. I also like soccer. And I like playing with my Game Boy. I want to be a veterinarian. Or maybe a scientist."

*Kevin spent two years at Fernie House. He now lives with his grandparents.*

Fernie House, established in 1964 by the PCC, operates six homes in Toronto and Pickering for girls and boys. Up to 47 youth can live in the homes. They may have behavioural or family problems, been charged with a crime, or are waiting for a court hearing. Fernie House also offers day treatment and family support. It is supported by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, congregations and individuals, and is under the oversight of the Presbyteries of East Toronto and Pickering.

Read other stories from this series,  
on our website at: [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)





# South to South

With a little help from the north. BY MARY LOU JOHNSTON

**T**his is a success story that must be told. It involves the determination of one man and his wife, some seed money, and the abundance of God's creation. It is the transfer of ideas from one southern country (Nicaragua) to another (El Salvador) with the help of our church in Canada. And the most thrilling thing is that this idea can continue to grow and develop in other directions because it involves plants and animals, which naturally reproduce. The economists call it sustainable development. But to those of us who have been involved, it is the result of the spirit of God working in the hearts of people in all three countries.

The story begins with Jim and Brenda Patterson, who were working through International Ministries in the early part of this decade (they're now back in Canada) in El Salvador. A mission and

outreach team from the Presbyterian church in Dunnville, Ont., was there in 2001 helping to build houses for families who had lost their homes in the latest earthquake. Pastor Felix Lino of the Iglesia Dios Compasivo, the Church of

**The next year saw a small stony piece of land transformed into a productive farm, giving forth many vegetables as well as fruit from young trees**

the Compassionate God, Ahuachapan, El Salvador, had developed the housing project with the Pattersons.

The Dunnville mission team returned to Central America over the years. One of those visits was with Denise van Wissen, then in Nicaragua (currently in Guatemala), where she was working on one of her Soynica

agriculture and nutrition projects. Lino and his wife Gloria joined the Dunnville team on that visit. They took copious notes and when they returned to El Salvador they got to work.

The next year saw a small stony piece of land transformed into a productive farm, giving forth many vegetables as well as fruit from young trees. This land surrounds a medical clinic which Patterson and other Canadians have been supporting and where Lino's other activities can take place: nutrition and sewing workshops for women and Saturday classes for local children, some of whom can't afford to go to regular school. The nutrition classes are important because although people do eat, they fill up on tortillas, a corn bread, so they lack a well-rounded diet. Because of yearly sunshine and rain (no winters there!) several crops of corn and other



## Transforming the land BY ALEX MACDONALD

Augusta Gómez remembers when her mother began to work with Soynica—a partner of Presbyterian World Service & Development committed to helping communities in Nicaragua improve nutrition—more than seven years ago. She watched over the next five years as her mother transformed her one-and-a-half acres of land into a kaleidoscope of fruit and vegetables destined for the local market and family dinner table. Not bad, Augusta thought, but she was sure she could do even better with the plot of land right next to her mother's. And so began a bit of friendly competition that benefited both families.

Augusta started listening to the Soynica radio show for an hour in the early morning. Each show explained a different technique for growing plants.

Like many in the area, she thought coffee and other plants would not grow on her land. "I thought coffee needed the very wet areas on the mountains," she explains. But she followed Soynica's advice and was pleased to see that her land could sustain a wide variety of

crops, including coffee.

She also learned to grind yucca leaves and other plants into an extract containing high levels of iron and vitamin A. Augusta's daughter, Tatiana, drinks the extract mixed with juice each morning. Boosted by this extra nutritional kick every day, Tatiana has shown a marked improvement in her grades at school as well as her overall health and energy levels.

It has taken Augusta two years to transform her plot of land and see it produce a variety of fruits and vegetables, even during times of drought. She has begun to realize the benefits, not only in her family's health and well-being but also in the income it generates.

Asked who's winning the family battle, Augusta smiles and rocks gently in her chair, "Both my mother and I are winning, but she had a five-year head start. I'll catch her sooner or later."

*Alexander MacDonald works at Presbyterian World Service and Development.*

vegetables can be grown in 12 months. Radishes were the big crop when we were there in July 2007. Fruit trees would soon be producing too. The community members had been able to bring loads of good soil and also put up a fence to keep out unwanted creatures. A fine old gentleman spends his days scrupulously guarding, weeding and watering this precious plot. The produce is used by the families in the community and some is sold so that new seeds can be bought for the next crops.

The next project is a movable chicken coop on a neighbouring plot of land. This can be operated like a microproject where after six weeks, a group of chicks can be sold as grown chickens, and the profit used to do it again. Gloria has introduced the women to the variety of good economical foods that should be eaten each

day, containing all the food nutrients. We added to these ideas in our workshops last summer. Some of the local families also want to grow food on their own small pieces of land so the idea is growing and enabling more people to benefit from the original plan.

El Salvador is a very poor country still suffering from the legacy of a brutal civil war. Wages are low and the cost of living is high. The government's first priorities do not include ensuring good hospital services or affordable schools. Therefore, anything that can help the people live healthier lives is a bonus. And leaders like Felix Lino, with his love of God and the people in his community, can make their land flow with papayas and radishes. ■

*Mary Lou Johnston is a member of Knox, Dunnville, Ont.*

## EXPLORE the WORLD

### ESCORTED TOURS

**CHINA & HONG KONG**  
Plus Yangtze Gorges Cruise  
2 Departures: Apr 15, Oct 7 – 20 Days

**SPLENDOURS OF SPAIN**  
Apr 15 – 18 Days

**JAPAN**  
May 8 – 14 Days

**BEST OF IRELAND**  
4 Departures: May 14, Jun 4, Sep 3,  
Sep 24 – 14 Days

**ICELAND**  
May 27 – 11 Days

**NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR**  
Aug 6 – 12 Days

**EPICUREAN DELIGHTS OF ITALY**  
Sep 17 – 14 Days

**BELLA TUSANY & UMBRIA**  
Oct 1 – 14 Days

**HEART OF EUROPE**  
Oct 7 – 14 Days

**TREASURES OF EGYPT**  
Oct 19 – 14 Days

### ESCORTED CRUISES

**EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN**  
Apr 26 – 14 Days

**CANADA & NEW ENGLAND**  
May 4 – 14 Days

**WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN**  
May 6 – 14 Days

**SOUTHERN FRANCE**  
2 Departures: May 6, Oct 14 – 15 Days

**NORWAY – LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN**  
2 Departures: May 11, May 22 – 17 Days

**DANUBE plus BUDAPEST & PRAGUE**  
2 Departures: May 14, Sep 3 – 14 Days

**ALASKA & THE YUKON**  
3 Departures: May 17, Jul 12,  
Aug 9 – 12 Days

**ALASKA – THE INSIDE PASSAGE**  
4 Departures: May 21, Jul 16, Aug 13,  
Sep 10 – 8 Days

**GREENLAND**  
Jul 16 – 10 Days



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# Poetry Contest Winners



# A Job Well Done

In 2007, St. Andrew's, Guelph, was looking for a way to continue its commitment to "Towards a World without AIDS" while at the same time answering the call of the denomination as it moved us into issues of water. Along came Pieter Wyminga at just the right time. Pieter spoke with passion about the tragedy of Darfur, Sudan, and the need for accessible drinking water for those living in refugee camps throughout the region. His initial enthusiasm for these global concerns came from the pages of this magazine. Pieter asked a very simple question, "Do you think this congregation would be interested in supporting well projects in Darfur and other parts of Africa?"

A Job "WELL" Done captured the hearts and minds of the people of St. Andrew's over the last year. We will continue the project until April, when we begin our 180th anniversary celebrations. By the end of 2007, we were on track to exceed \$15,000 of givings to PWS&D. At the end of the project, we look forward to hearing of how our support

to PWS&D has impacted and changed the lives of people in Sudan and other parts of the African continent.

We trust that the poetry contest—initiated in these pages last June and part of our pre-anniversary campaign—has encouraged other congregations to look for creative ways of making a difference in our world by partnering with the strong arm and good people of PWS&D. The winning poem reflected the work carried out by PWS&D very well and we would like to congratulate Elaine Forgo of Knox Presbyterian Church, Burlington, Ont. On behalf of PWS&D and St. Andrew's, Guelph, we sincerely thank you for your generous contribution and trust that the readers will be moved with your message as much as we were. A donation of \$500 will be extended in Elaine's name to PWS&D. All in all, we feel it is a job "WELL" done.

*Pieter Wyminga  
Rev. John Borthwick  
St. Andrew's, Guelph*

## WINNING ENTRIES

Read all entries on our website at [www.presbyterianrecord.com](http://www.presbyterianrecord.com)

### PWS&D

By Elaine Forgo  
Knox, Burlington, Ont.

I want to tell you about PWS&D,  
So let's take a minute and have some tea  
To let you know about the work they do.  
They raise funds to help others. Yes, it's true,  
And you'd be surprised what that money can do!

It provides for programs, medication  
and books for education  
Which make folk well and stirs their imagination.  
It helps create jobs through mini loans,  
And builds churches, schools and  
sometimes homes.  
It even teaches farmers about their animals,  
seed and loam.

It all comes down to just you and me  
To share our gifts to help each other see  
The need to help nations far and wide  
Have clean water, good food, hope,  
independence and pride.  
The good that's done cannot be denied.

Young and old, big and small, well or ill –  
each fit the bill.  
So, by sharing with dedication, love  
and a sense of thrill,  
You can take an active role  
In helping PWS&D remain committed  
to their goal.  
What a great opportunity to make things whole!

### God Made The World For One and All

By Joan Melbye-Hansen  
St. Giles, Peterborough, Ont.

God made the world for one and all  
Gave more to some than others  
A test, I'd say, for some of us  
To take care of our brothers.

What we give comes back to us  
In countless blessed ways  
So give from the heart until it hurts  
With humility and grace.

When we help others help themselves  
It makes them independent  
And paints a brighter picture  
For the future of descendants.

Every time God gives to you  
Think long of what I've said  
Sharing comes from a loving heart  
And one and all are fed.

### Ode to PWSD

By Ron Harrod

When life is not what it should be  
When people suffer or are not free  
We know our merciful God will see  
And send in the PWS&D

Those in Malawi who have poor soil  
Can't reap rewards from their toil  
So Christians help to show the way  
And harvest is a wonderful day

A tsunami is a terrible event  
Homes are gone and there is no tent  
So PWS&D steps in  
And house construction will begin

By now you see how our God loves  
And uses those unselfish doves  
At PWS&D to show  
His love can make mountains grow

# Living in a Gardasil World

It's scripture and tradition versus harm reduction.

BY ROLAND J. DE VRIES

Although it seemed a relatively innocuous line item in last year's federal budget, the Conservative government's HPV (human papilloma-virus) vaccination program has generated more controversy than might have been expected. The latest instalment in the debate unfolded as various Catholic school boards in Ontario considered whether to allow the vaccine to be administered within their elementary schools. The Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops weighed in with an open letter, suggesting that introduction of the vaccine is inconsistent with a Roman Catholic understanding of human life and sexuality.

Defenders of the vaccination program remind us that Gardasil (Merck's HPV vaccine) immunizes girls and young women against the two strains of HPV that cause 70 per cent of cervical cancer cases. And for many this is enough to settle the debate—if it reduces the risk of cancer, what other response could we offer than a resounding “Yes?” Indeed, in view of the purported health benefits of the vaccine, the unwillingness of the Ontario Conference of Catholic bishops to endorse the vaccine appears to some as nothing less than medieval. On this issue, however, our sympathies should lie with the bishops.

My own criticism of this national program takes as a point of departure the realization that there is a fundamental difference between HPV and other childhood diseases against which most of us have been inoculated; the difference is in the method of transmission. With the measles, chicken pox, polio, or the mumps, transmission is through everyday human intercourse. These diseases are passed from one person to the next through sneezing, coughing, or skin-to-skin contact. Although they

have varying degrees of contagiousness, in a world without vaccinations it would be relatively difficult to protect oneself or one's children from these diseases.

Gardasil differs from other childhood vaccinations by virtue of the fact that the disease it protects against is transmitted primarily through a particular form of human intercourse—namely, genital contact—rather than through everyday human interaction. This means that Gardasil protects against HPV while allowing unprotected sexual contact, which is to say that a national vaccination program is intended to allow a very specific form of behaviour while mitigating the harm that might otherwise result from it.

The logic behind this vaccination program is the same logic that governs many social policy decisions in Canada today: harm prevention. Various philosophers and ethicists have remarked that “harm prevention” is almost the only ethical principle available to societies that lack a shared sense of what is good and true and beautiful. Canada is one such society. Ours is increasingly a society in which judgments about the good, the true, and the beautiful are cast into the private sphere—we have no shared, public vision of the good.

Accordingly, the HPV vaccination program simply ignores the question of what is good and right for our children and youth with respect to sexual intimacy. It aims only to prevent harm. But this creates a dilemma for those who identify themselves as Christians and who are therefore inheritors of



a particular vision of human life and sexuality.

Confronted with the question of whether we will buy into the HPV vaccination program, we are forced to ask whether we will repudiate the virtue of practical wisdom, and the good toward which it leads, and buy into the anemic logic of harm prevention. Some in the Church will suggest that the two can be held together in this situation, but I am far from convinced. These represent two competing and incommensurable ways of looking at and living in the world. To choose one is decisively to undermine the other. Will we lead our daughters in a rich vision of the good that is handed down to us in scripture and tradition, or will we live in a Gardasil world of harm prevention?

This, of course, is not only a dilemma for Christians. It is a dilemma for every parent who would train their children in practical wisdom and lead them into a form of life (including a sexual life) that is true to their humanity. ■

*Rev. Roland J. De Vries is presently completing a PhD in Theological Ethics at McGill University. He is the father of three children, including two young daughters.*





Camp Geddie

# A Chance to be Together

Presbyterian camps provide a place to grow and have fun

## Camp Cairn

**T**he zing of the zip line, and the squeal of joy from the camper suspended high above a clearing at a Presbyterian camp in Muskoka, Ont., is the music in Beth "Topaz" Allison's summer headquarters.

Allison is one of the executive directors of Cairn, formerly known as Glen

Mhor, near Baysville, Ont. A camper herself, who became staff, then a camp director, she is now mom to two camp staffers. She says Presbyterian camping offers a Christ-centred environment that doesn't skimp on fun and challenges. From the zip line to the three-day canoe trips, the campfire vespers and the morning worship, Cairn is about personal and spiritual discovery.

The guiding principles at Cairn are the four S's. The answer must be yes to all four questions before counsellors and campers can do an activity:

1. Is it safe?
2. Does it promote good stewardship of God's creation?
3. Does it serve others in the community?
4. Does it enhance a person's self-esteem?



# ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT



"More than ever, we need to provide our children with a place to grow without criticism or stereotypes," says Allison. "They don't need to grow up before their time. While they are here, they are away from the media and away from role models that may not be the best. They get the chance to try new things without worrying about failing."

The camp staff, many of whom are former campers, are rigorously selected and trained based on a number of factors, including leadership ability that goes beyond guiding the campers through the day. They are also trained in how to spot bullying or if someone is showing signs of having an eating disorder.

"It is an intense program," she says. "We want them to work in a supportive environment from the moment they arrive. Everyone here knows that there are people they can go to for help—whether they are a camper or on staff."

Dorothy Lake Family Camp near Kirkland Lake, and Iona, a wilderness camping experience next to Cairn in Baysville, are part of the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda. Since 2005, they have operated under

the Cairn umbrella, each with its own distinctive personality.

At a 2004 synod meeting, discussions centered on a recommendation that all the Ontario campsites be sold and all camping programs be relocated to the Baysville site. Allison said the recommendation did not take into account the needs of people in the north, or how cherished each of the sites were to former campers.

After a year of discussion and consultation with stakeholders, a plan was devised to incorporate the programs under the Cairn umbrella.

"We needed to do some re-visioning, to make better use of resources and to have full-time leadership," says Allison. "What we discovered as we worked through the process is that youth camping in the Presbyterian Church is so ingrained that it would be very hard to let it go. It is part of our tradition—and we reach out to a lot of people who might never otherwise hear about God."

"Blending the camps has been a phenomenal amount of work because we wanted to honour the traditions of each of the camps, while bringing them toge-

ther. We didn't want to have a melting pot because we wanted to not only preserve the history of the camps, we wanted to celebrate them," says Allison. "There have been a few changes, but we have tried to stay as close as possible to what people are used to doing at each of the camps."

In addition to the traditional week or two at camp for children aged seven to 16, Cairn offers programs for youth groups and their leaders in early spring and late fall, and weeks devoted to family camping at Baysville or at Dorothy Lake.

For more information on Cairn, go to [www.ilovecamp.org](http://www.ilovecamp.org).

## Gracefield Camp

Janet Stark and her family find peace and contentment in spending time in the Gatineau Hills in Quebec at Gracefield Camp and Conference Centre ([www.gracefieldcamp.ca](http://www.gracefieldcamp.ca)), part of the Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario.

Stark, a resident of Kemptville, Ont., and an elder in the Seaway/Glengarry Presbytery, says she wanted to give her children the chance not only to experience nature and all the fun of summer camp, but also to make and keep "wholesome, Christian friends."

"We enjoy nature and we love the outdoors," she says. "They were involved in scouting and being able to go to a Presbyterian Church camp was a safe place to enhance that experience."

In time, all three of her children became camp counsellors, and still return to the conference centre to help out on work weekends.

"Really, it is any excuse at all to return to camp and see their friends. Youth camping is something the church does very well, yet every year we know all the camps are struggling to raise the funds to keep it going. They are never really assured from one summer to the next."

"This is a ministry—there needs to be group action, a commitment to support the camps. It is a mission right here at



home because there are youth who aren't involved in any other kind of church group, and we know that every hour of camp is equal to the number of minutes per year they have in Sunday school," says Stark.

She wonders aloud that if a national coffee shop chain can raise money for camp on one day of coffee sales, "then surely the Presbyterian Church can have one Sunday where all the offerings across Canada can go to a fund to support the camps."

## Camp Geddie

**A**udrey Cameron agrees that youth camping might be one of the most effective ministries of the Presbyterian Church. Cameron, camping and youth

consultant for the Atlantic synod, is also executive director of Camp Geddie ([www.campgeddie.ca](http://www.campgeddie.ca)) near New Glasgow, N.S.

The camp offers not only summer camp for children aged seven to 17, but also family camping and a year-round retreat facility. Overlooking the Northumberland Strait, the camp has some of the most spectacular sunsets in the country, and they help to make night vespers a treasured experience for many current and former campers, says Cameron.

Camp Geddie is about to launch a fundraising campaign to purchase an additional 41 acres of land from a local family, and Cameron is excited about the possibilities the expansion creates.

"We are involved in mission here," she says. "There is a rhythm to the day that exists nowhere else in life, and it is

focused on God and on the teachings of Christ. It is a great opportunity to be part of a young person's formative years, and to give them a meaningful summer. There are lots of camps selling a camp experience; the bonus we provide is that it is



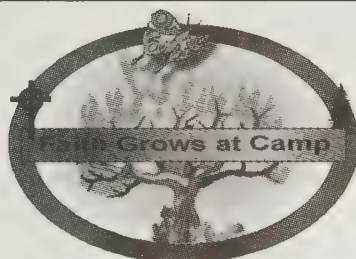
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in Christian community. We have a lot of campers who come to us through family and children's services. They are looking for a safe and happy respite, away from the hard lives they live."

Cameron says camp makes a difference in young lives because campers are immersed in a Christian community that supports and guides them. Along the way, they hear the teachings of Jesus in a gentle and accessible way. For some, it may be the first time they hear them.

"I remember one little boy, and his prayer was, 'You are the best Lord in the whole wide world and I hope it always stays that way.' It was such a simple statement of faith. It has become my own prayer everyday. The campers inspire and encourage the staff everyday, and the work we do frees us to go deeper into our own faith. Camping is the greatest and most successful outreach program the church does."

She adds that synod and individual churches, along with members of the community, have been incredibly supportive over the years, offering money, time and talent to support the camp.

"We never have enough money—we

live on a shoestring," she says. "But it just seems that what God orders, God pays for."

Not long ago, the camp had to replace 18 mattresses that had been attacked and destroyed by mice. The cost was pegged at \$1,900. Cameron began hunting for corners to cut and manoeuvres to make in order to find the money. In the meantime, the mattresses were readied for their trip to the dump. Someone driving by saw them and drove up with \$100 toward their replacement. Eventually, the money came in and the mattresses were replaced.

"That's just the way camp works," Cameron says. "There is a lot of fear in the church about people getting older and the congregations shrinking, but here at camp, it is happy and alive. It is just amazing."

## Camp Kannawin

On the shores of Sylvan Lake, Alta., midway between Calgary and Edmonton, the Synod of Alberta and Northwest owns and operates Camp Kannawin ([www.synodabnw.ca/camp.htm](http://www.synodabnw.ca/camp.htm))

Rev. Helen Smith, the camp's executive director, says the six days campers have at camp are a form of Christian immersion that becomes a legacy.

"Even kids who go to church find it is different at camp. The subtle expressions of faith take on new life because everything is more intentional at camp," she says. "They have the experience of people able to worship with creation all around you, and the pace is slightly different. Even though we are busy doing all kinds of camp activities, God is at the centre."

The family camping program at Kannawin provides an opportunity to allow families to spend time together, away from the bustle of regular life, she says.

"We have grandmas and grandpas coming along too, and everyone has a chance to be together, and I think that is a really neat aspect."

As in all camps, Smith says money is always an issue.

"This is an expensive, labour-intensive outreach program for the church, and you have to sink money into it," she says. "However, it is something that pays the church back in time. So many people in church leadership have been campers at one time or another. They learned about God, about leadership and about what it means to be a community of faith at camp. There are a lot of churches now that have no youth programs, no outreach to young people at all. Adults who are in the church right now have had camp experience in the past. The church is investing in its future by supporting camping now."

Even if they never return to church, the children learn lessons at camp that stay with them, Smith says. Last summer, a number of surprising relationships developed among the campers, including between children who didn't speak much English and those with special needs.

"They learn in all kinds of ways, and they rally around each other. And really, that's what a community is all about." ■

Nancy Devine is a freelance writer.



# Sharing The Love

We must learn about our neighbour's faith and customs. BY CALVIN BROWN

February is a time when we think about love and part of that is the Lenten emphasis on repentance for not loving enough. As I thought about that I reflected on my experiences with our Muslim neighbours.

I want to share with you some of the experiences I've had in the last several months. At the last General Assembly, Imam Hamid Slimi was invited to speak to the Court and assured us we had much in common including the doctrine of Predestination, which a member of the committee hastened to assure him we weren't sure we believed anymore. The response of the assembly concerning his presence ran from those who were excited to have a Muslim address us, through those curious about what he might say, to at least one minister who resigned from the denomination because he saw this as shared worship with those who worshipped a different God.

Later in the year I was preaching at a church anniversary service and was introduced to a smiling and charming man who attended the service and explained that he was a Muslim missionary working among Canadians.

A few weeks earlier I had seen in the local paper an advertisement inviting people to visit the local Mosque to learn about the Islamic faith and the same week a local Presbyterian church was hosting a seminar led by prominent Muslims explaining their



faith to the Christians in attendance. It ended, I'm told, with the group praying together. I also stumbled onto a webpage entitled "How to convert to Islam." The attempt to persuade others is not one-sided.

The last story is one about a professional Presbyterian, who is an elder in his congregation. He was approached by one of his Muslim clients who proceeded to attempt to proselytize him. His response was that he was a Presbyterian elder in his church and the conversation ended. The elder speaking to me later asked what the Renewal Fellowship or church offices

was doing to educate Christians about such meetings with Muslims they encounter.

How do we prepare to meet with our Muslim neighbours?

As Christians we are told to love everyone we meet and that includes Muslims who now outnumber Presbyterians in Canada. It is likely, barring a great revival, that this trend will continue. But whether we are in the majority or minority we need to remember that we need to love our neighbour as ourselves. The golden rule given by Christ is as binding on us now as it was in the past. We need to treat ►





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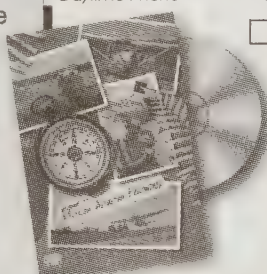
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all people with respect remembering that they are all created in the image of Christ—that includes even those some would consider our enemies. As Jesus challenges us we need to even bless those who curse us and pray for those who treat us shamefully. It is only as we are able to do that that we will see the earth renewed and His kingdom come.

But specifically how are we to be with them? Should we ignore them? Should we confront them? Should we try sharing with them? Only the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, can direct

## To affirm their faith as of equal value in reconciling us with God is patently unchristian

you in each situation, but I believe that the best approach is to show them love and acceptance as people and protect their rights to freely express their faith within the laws of the land. This is the same freedom we desire to exercise our faith. The response suggested however, is a long way from affirming their faith as having equal saving value as faith in Christ. To affirm their faith as of equal value in reconciling us with God is patently unchristian. As *Living Faith* reminds us, we acknowledge that other people may have different faiths and we are to acknowledge the good we see in them. At the same time however, in humility, we need to share the "truth that will set people free."

*Living Faith* concludes the discussion well saying "We witness to God in Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life and invite others to accept from him the forgiveness of God. We are *compelled* to share this good news." [Emphasis mine.]

In this season of love let us love our neighbours enough to learn about their faith and customs and let us learn how our faith can be shared with them in a way that brings them God's saving grace in a new and full way. ■

*Rev. Calvin Brown is the executive director of The Renewal Fellowship within the Presbyterian Church in Canada.*

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# Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

Nobody said being a Christian would be easy.

BY GWYNETH J. WHILSMITH

St. Paul said he saw in a mirror dimly (1 Cor. 13:12), which we take to mean that the looking glasses of his time weren't up to much. Not so now.

Recently, I stayed in a hotel that was literally lined with mirrors from the foyer up, and they were anything but dim. The first time I entered the elevator I met this woman who looked vaguely familiar coming off. It wasn't until we almost collided head-on that it dawned on me that it was her getting off who was me getting on. Scary.

Up in my room, the closet doors were floor-to-ceiling looking-glass as well. Imagine my shock when the first morning, in a half-awake state, I glimpsed someone moving around in my bed. My heart stopped—had someone sneaked in in the night?

Having all those mirrors around was disconcerting because there was no place to hide. They followed you everywhere, whether you were dressed to the nines or undressed to the buff. There you were with every bump, bulge, roll and wrinkle, all in clear, brilliant colour.

My first reaction was to run out and buy Dr. Atkins's diet book, but the food was so good at that hotel, and after all, I was on holiday. Still, the image of those extra pounds stays with me and now I'm home I know I really must do something about all that unattractive weight.

The remembrance of those mirrors makes me think of things more serious,



too. Frederick Buechner in his book *The Faces of Christ* says while we may search for the face of Christ all our lives, what it all comes down to is that His face is really our own face—that others should be able to see His face in the face of His followers. This is both exhilarating and terrifying.

About 30 years ago, a Pentecostal acquaintance said, "Gwyn, when I look into your face I see Jesus." I was so flabbergasted and embarrassed that it was impossible to stutter a coherent reply, but my first thought was, "This woman is a nut case." A bit wiser now, if anyone said that to me today, I still might be shocked but I'd also feel humble exhilaration mixed with a good deal of shame. I'd be thrilled that somehow something of Jesus showed in my face at that particular moment, but also ashamed because in all honesty I would know that most of the time my face would show nothing of Jesus at all.

From what we read of Jesus in the

gospels we know his face showed deep compassion, tolerance and acceptance. He taught us to love everyone, not just the people we liked but also those who didn't share our beliefs or even our standards or morals. Feed the hungry (even the beggar who doesn't want to work?), help the sick person with AIDS (even though it may be their own fault?), visit the prisoner (even though they defrauded the weak or even committed murder?). "Yes," Jesus says, "even those. Let your face be My face." That's hard.

Well, Jesus never said being His follower would be easy. Just the opposite. And I'm sure He does expect us to get out of our comfortable pews and into the hurly burly to mirror His face and presence where bad things happen. He did promise, after all, to be right there with us. So, what's to worry? ■

*Gwyneth J. Whilsmith is a contributing editor to the Record.*



# Renew Life

We are reborn with God's guidance. BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

February 17, 2008  
(Second Sunday in Lent)  
John 3:1-17

**N**ote to preachers: Resist the temptation to cut this week's Gospel short. Next week, and the week after, too! Introduce some variation to these long lections through drama, or sharing the reading with other voices.

Now to the story of Nicodemus, Jesus, and the wind. I like to imagine Nicodemus, up on his Jerusalem rooftop late one hot night, trying to catch a breeze. His head is full of the acts and proceedings of the Sanhedrin. He sees the flicker of a campfire on the hillside outside the city. He knows Jesus is there, awake, too. His head full of ... Well, Nicodemus wants to know.

Nicodemus comes to Jesus "by night," which speaks of secrecy more than time. Nicodemus wants to know, but doesn't want to be found out. Not yet. The day will come when he won't be afraid to stand up, stand up for Jesus. Not yet.

We get bogged down on "born

again" versus "born from above." The answer is "both." The new, true life is God's gift. Jesus has already declared that He's about something new, at the wedding in Cana and in the temple at Jerusalem. Nicodemus knows Jesus has come from God. He's just not sure what that means. Not yet.

Jesus tells him he has to start all over again. From scratch. (That's the "again" part.) Let God show him the way. (That's the "from above" part.) Nicodemus can only imagine birth in one way. Jesus talks about water and Spirit. We get bogged down here, too. Jesus may mean baptism, or He may be talking about Creation with a capital C. This new beginning is as big a deal as birth. As big a deal as Genesis! Jesus makes a distinction between flesh and Spirit (or spirit, or wind). Between just living and being really alive.

We get stuck a third time on the apparent anti-Judaism, or supersessionism here. Are Nicodemus and his people all wrong, and Jesus all right? That's what John thinks, but he can reach beyond that belief. There's a shift from

the singular to the plural in verse seven. Jesus looks over Nicodemus' shoulder. Looks beyond the teachers and leaders Nicodemus represents. Looks over Jerusalem in the early morning light, and sees the whole world. That's why we should always read verses 16 and 17. This isn't about Jesus tossing out His own religion in favour of a revised version. This is about God's love for the cosmos.

We get stuck in this story because we focus on the old life, the first birth, and what we think must be left behind. We should look for signs that show us what the new life looks like. Jesus says, "So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." How is it? Look, or feel, for the wind. I live in hurricane country. I know what the wind can do. It's just as plain on the prairies, or in a mountain pass, or in the concrete valley of a city street. Wind is power. Wind brings change. Wind knows no borders, makes no distinctions. Wind can also bring refreshment. Renew life. Be God's breath to us.

Filled with the new, true life. More than just living, really alive. Life-giving, borderless, relentless in mission, gentle as a breeze, change-makers, barrier-breakers, risk-takers. "So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Is it so with us? ■

*Rev. Laurence DeWolfe is minister at St. David's, Halifax.*



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# The Best Valentine's Gift

Through the valley, with joy.

BY PHIL CALLAWAY

**I**t began in March with a phone call home. "I've got great news," I told my wife. Then I read from the front page of the newspaper: "The gene that causes Huntington's disease has been discovered after a decade-long search, sparking hope a cure can be found for the deadly neurological disorder." Ramona listened, her heart pounding.

As a young teen she learned that Huntington's was in her family and there was a 50-50 chance she would eventually die from it. During the next 20 years, she watched three siblings—all in their 30s—contract the disease, one making the slow and humiliating journey to a nursing home.

And now Ramona had resigned herself to the fact that she had it too. The symptoms were there: depression, lack of sleep, loss of memory, irritability, occasional clumsiness—even a craving for sweets. I kept telling her that each of these could be traced to living with me. This she found amusing for awhile, but every time she stumbled, every time she arrived at the fridge and forgot why she was there, she knew she had Huntington's. So each time I stubbed my toe, I told her about it. Each time I arrived at the fridge and stared blankly at the salad dressing (a daily occurrence), I would inform her. And we would laugh. And sometimes we'd cry.

With the morning paper came the realization that for the first time in history those who were at risk could know their future with a simple blood

test. So two months later Ramona was tested.

"There's no chance of the tubes getting mixed up, is there?" I asked the nurse. She smiled at my worry, then showed us how the tubes were labelled. I appreciated the method. But I had no idea that limited public interest and even less government funding would make us wait 10 months for the results.

During those months we were surprised by the comfort of God's promises. On the countless nights when we lay in bed, unable to sleep, Bible verses hidden away in my childhood came back to comfort us. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea." (Psalm 46:1) "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to give you hope and a future." (2 Jeremiah 29:11)

In early January the phone call came. The waiting was over. The verdict was in. We would hear it—on February 14. Was this someone's idea of a cruel joke? I wondered. This was a day for cupids and hearts ... not final verdicts.

We followed a doctor down a corridor and into a dimly lit office. Beside an oak desk sat another doctor. Both looked grim. We exchanged nervous greetings. The doctor opened an envelope, examined its contents and kindly said,

"Ramona, you have the normal gene."

"You mean I don't have it?" Ramona was on the edge of her chair.

"You don't have it."

"I don't?" She was standing now.

When I think of happiness, I think of that moment. I realized that I'd been in the company of something even greater during those 10 months in the valley. You see, during those months, I was often short of happiness, but never joy. Joy doesn't depend on happy endings. On good news or sunny circumstances. Joy comes from knowing that whatever happens, God is good. Whatever happens, God loves me. Whatever happens, we can live forever when we place our trust in Him.

Oh yes, you're wondering about Ramona's symptoms. Well, the doctors attribute them to depression, but she's smiling a little more lately. And she finally admits that most of them can be traced to living with me. I'm wondering though about the craving for pickles and ice cream. ■

*Read more of Phil and Ramona's story in his book *Laughing Matters* (Harvest House). You can order it at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com)*







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## PWS&D Committee Announcement

Presbyterian World Service & Development is updating its database of potential committee members to serve on its dynamic national church committee. Please send in your resume if you are interested in helping establish policies, priorities, focus and direction for PWS&D.

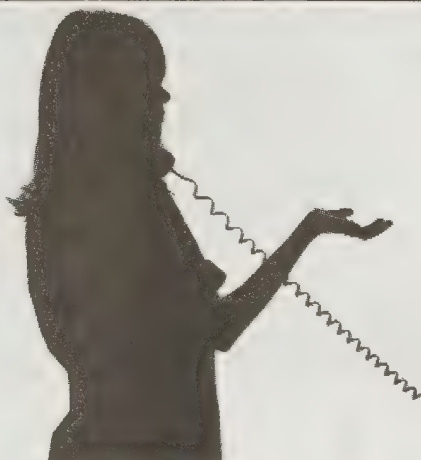
Appointments onto the PWS&D National Committee are made by the Life and Mission Agency. Committee members are expected to promote the work of PWS&D in their home congregations, presbytery and synod. Positions are coming available in 2008; however, all applications will be kept on file for future consideration.

A number of criteria are used to have a balanced national committee representing the church. For full details, visit [www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd).

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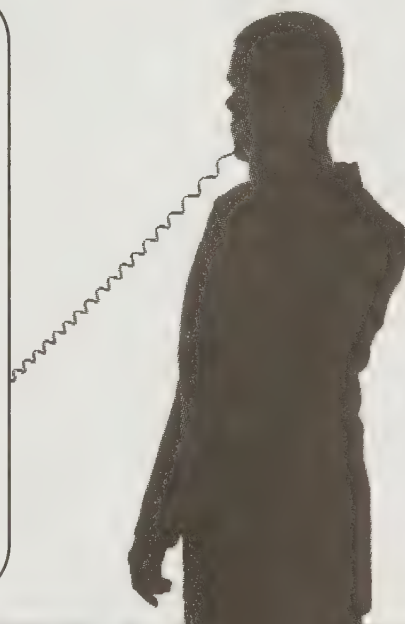


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# Pancake Day

Simplicity leads to God, purity enjoys Him. BY DAVID WEBBER

Grandma was raised an Anglican; Grandpa not so much. He was raised a Methodist but I don't think Grandma ever held it against him. All this is to say that Grandma was responsible for rituals in the very English household where I went to live when I was five. One ritual she held to every Tuesday before Lent was what she called Shrove Tuesday. Grandpa and I called it Pancake Day. We, or at least I, didn't have a clue what it was really all about, except on that day Grandma made rich pancakes slightly thicker than a crepe and served them with brown sugar and lemon.

Shrove Tuesday in England was a day of "shriving" or confession before the beginning of Lent. It was the day when good Anglicans emptied their cupboards of rich ingredients such as eggs, milk and sugar to dispose of them

and their inherent temptation prior to the 40 days of fasting associated with Lent. Pancakes were an efficient way of using up these valuable perishables in addition to providing a minor celebration feast prior to the fast of Lent. The operative word here is minor, as—typical of British understatement in all things—Shrove Tuesday was certainly a key lower than the traditions of Europe where the French celebrated the day as the final blast of Mardi Gras and the Germans celebrated it as Fat Tuesday.

Pancake Day: A simple celebration to begin 40 days of simplicity. At least that is how I have come to terms with Lent. Yes, I know the traditions of penitence, holy fasting and of pre-baptismal instruction associated with Lent in preparation for the celebration of Easter. But I am a Presbyterian and

I am fed a penitential faith 365 days a year. And I see nothing holy, let alone healthy about fasting. And I am already baptized and living in John Knox's "greatest school of Christ since the time of the Apostles." For me, Lent is becoming a celebration of simplicity.

I am discovering that my cupboards are way too full. When you have to play ennie-meenie-minee-mo to figure out what clothes to wear, or what shoes to put on, or what bathroom to use or what computer to switch on or what car to drive ... your cupboards are way too full. I live in a spirit of excess and as a result, I know I have deteriorated spiritually. One way to recover is to empty the cupboards.

So what does that look like? For me, it includes dealing with my excesses in possessions, but it has to go way beyond that. My cupboards are not only over-



flowing with possessions, but with work, travel, food, words, ideas ... the list is incredible. The problem with my tendency to excess is that it breeds a complexity that becomes overwhelming, distracting and even confusing. It is hell on wheels for spiritual growth.

The other day, in my time of contemplation, I was once again dragged into the Scriptures to where Jesus was visiting Martha (Lk.10:38-42). It was at Martha's house and so it was expected that she as host would be the one doing the serving. Mary, though her sister, is as much a guest as Jesus is in Martha's house. Mary should be free to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to His words, if she so chooses. Martha chooses serving. It is a logical choice—after all, who else is going to get dinner ready? But the story says Martha was distracted with “much” serving. Jesus says she was “worried” and “bothered” by “much” serving. (Those are my very same problems with excess; distraction, worry and bother.) Martha recognizes the problem and goes to Jesus about it. The thing is, her solution isn't very practical. She wants to scoop Mary up into her excessive serving. (Such is the nature of my excesses. I am always wanting to scoop up others into them.) Jesus won't allow Martha to scoop Mary up into her excess. Neither does He say, “Stop serving.” That would be impractical. He says: “Only one thing is necessary.” The only way that what Jesus says to Martha makes any sense to me is if it applies to the serving—in other words, “only one dish is necessary.”

This is simplicity. Simplicity is willful limitation, choosing “one thing” so that life is not distracted, worried or bothered with “many things.” Simplicity like that can be applied to every aspect of my life. It liberates me, allowing for a determined focus, especially a determined spiritual focus. As such, simplicity is a spiritual discipline, finding a niche in our discipleship along with prayer, contemplation and purity. This is what Richard Foster writes about so powerfully in his book, *The Freedom of Simplicity*, my personal recommendation for a worthy Lenten

reading project.

The thing about simplicity is, for me at least, that it begins with a physical choice. It is when I choose to limit stuff physically in my life that the results seem to transcend my inward being, bringing an inward simplicity or spiritual simplicity. My best friend, who passed away just recently, was a wonderful case in point. He was wealthy enough to fill his house with all the excesses and toys of a modern society. However, when you visited his rather modest home, there were just the barest of necessities: a china set of four, a cutlery set of four, a closet with one suit and just enough other clothes to get him between washes, one pair of dress shoes and one pair of runners for everything else. I could go on, but my point is, because of the physical simplicity all around, just being alone in his house was somehow liberating and peaceful. I often found it a prayerful place to be, and my good friend was not someone who was in your face about being prayerful.

The New Testament has much to say about simplicity, for example in Acts 2:46 and 2 Cor.11:3. It is always referring to inward simplicity, or as it is sometimes translated, sincerity. My point is that inward simplicity is most often found through outward simplicity, choosing to willfully and outwardly empty the cupboards of my life of its excesses. Simplicity as a spiritual discipline was so important that one of the first great reformers, John Hus, when amidst great controversy was betrayed and martyred, spoke his last words, “O holy simplicity!” From the same time in history, but the other side of the Reformation, Tomas a Kempis wrote in *The Imitations of Christ*: “A man is raised up from the earth by two wings—simplicity and purity. There must be simplicity in his intention and purity in his desires. Simplicity leads to God, purity embraces and enjoys Him.”■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry.*

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### Holy Week Schedule:

Monday, March 17th

**PETER'S COMMISSIONING**

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Tuesday, March 18th

**PETER'S DENIAL**

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Wednesday, March 19th

**PETER'S RECOMMISSIONING**

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Thursday, March 20th

**HOLY COMMUNION**

*Rev. Will Ingram*

12:00 noon  
Organ Recital

12:15 pm  
Meditation

12:45 pm  
Sandwiches





# Called to Wonder

CREATED BY ERIN WALTON

Lent is the 40 day period that prepares us for Easter. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent and it ends on Maundy Thursday (the day before Good Friday). In some Christian traditions, people give up something for Lent. However, in the Reformed/Presbyterian tradition we add deeds of kindness.

**Try some of the following Lenten activities with your family and see what it adds to your life!**

## Exploring Lent...

### Buy a tree.

Donate a tree to a park or deforested area. Planting a live tree reminds us that Christ's death and resurrection points to eternal life.

### Bud forsythia branches.

Buds remind us how our faith grows through nourishment and warmth during Lent. Bring barren branches indoors, set in water and wait patiently for buds to appear.

### Fast.

If you are a teen, try a day of fasting. Fasting helps us remember how Jesus suffered and how people suffer today. Read Matthew 6:16-18. (Oil was used for celebrating.) Remember to drink lots of fluids. Talk with someone about this experience and what it meant to you.

### Make a prayer corner.

During the season of Lent, make a prayer corner in your home or bedroom. Spend some quiet time there each day. Put on the table a purple cloth or napkin (purple is the colour of Lent), a candle, a Bible, and any object that reminds you of Jesus.

### Read a collection of stories about Holy Week.

Luke 22:7-13  
John 13:2-17  
Matthew 26:20-25  
1 Corinthians 11:23-26  
Matthew 26:36-46  
John 18:2-14  
Luke 23:1-25  
Matthew 27:27-31  
John 19:16b-30

### Offering "CAN"dles.

Use glass paints to decorate glass jars which can then be used to collect money during Lent for your church's particular Lent appeal.

If you're looking for a project to support, visit: [www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd/](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd/) for the current PWS&D supported projects. For example: Hope for Afghanistan—a PWS&D-supported project bringing water to those suffering from drought and poverty in Bamiyan, Afghanistan. When the money is donated, tea lights can be lit in the jars to symbolise sharing the love of God. (Be careful and ask an adult to help you!)

*Some ideas taken from "Lenten Activities for Children & Youth" as posted on [www.presbyterian.ca](http://www.presbyterian.ca).*



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Sunny Corner Pastoral Charge, N.B., St. Ste-  
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Rev. H. Martyn Van Essen, 7 Hierlihy Rd.,  
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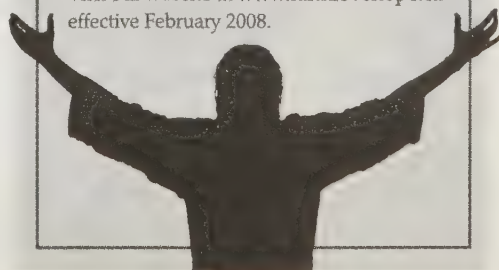
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Vancouver, Kerrisdale Presbyterian Church; Co-Interim Moderators Revs. Joyce and Glen Davis, 6040 Iona Dr., Vancouver, BC C. V6T 2E8; 604-822-9807; gdavis@vst.edu.

## Obituaries

COLQUHOUN, Rev. Duncan Alexander, B.A., M.Div., died suddenly on July 8, 2007, at his home in Brantford, Ont. at the age of 56 years. Duncan grew up in Hamilton, Ont., and in Knox Church,

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Hamilton. He was certified by the Presbytery of Hamilton as a candidate for the ministry. After service in Trinity, Calgary, Alta., Lynden United Church, and the charge of New Glasgow, Rodney, in the Presbytery of London, he was minister of Knox Church, Brantford, and Mount Pleasant Church, Mount Pleasant, Ont., from Nov. 14, 2004 until July 8, 2007.

His untimely death is mourned by his parishioners and his colleagues in presbytery, but especially by his former spouse Delaina, his daughter Meghan, his sons Gavin and Dylan, and his father Ned. Brothers Ian of Switzerland, Rod of Kitchener, Ont., Gordon of Ottawa, Ont., and sister Margaret of Acton, Ont., and their families also mourn his death.

**FORGIE**, Fraser Alexander, died on Oct. 30, 2007, age 95. Fraser lived his whole life in the Wingham, Ont., area and is survived by his wife of 45 years, Kae Wilcox Forgie. He was a member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Wingham, and will be sorely missed by many. He was a very kind man with a warm sense of humour and a generous nature.

**GRAINGER**, Joan, born in 1922, passed away in Prince George, B.C., on Nov. 3, 2007. Joan was an active member of St. Giles' Presbyterian Church, Prince George, since July 1960, was Sunday school superintendent for 17 years and a member of session for 39 years. Joan was a life member of the W.M.S., serving many times as its president, and of the W.M.S. Kamloops Presbyterial. She was also Clerk of the Presbytery of Kamloops for 36 years and attended the General Assembly seven times. She was a member of the board of congregational life, provincially and nationally. Joan was a dedicated and conscientious Clerk of Presbytery. Joan also volunteered her time for local social groups outside of the church. Her energy, enthusiasm and wise counsel will be missed by all the organizations for which she so tirelessly worked.

**HOLMES**, Donald Louis, aged 80, of Bible Hill and formerly of Antigonish, N.S., passed away on June 16, 2007. He was a dedicated, faithful elder since 1980 of Barney's River-Marshy Hope Pastoral Charge, N.S.

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## Birth Announcement

**ATKIN/NAGY**, Rev. (Nancy) Elaine Nagy and Mr. Ralph Atkin, are thrilled to announce the birth of their beautiful daughter Kathleen Joan Atkin on Oct. 24, 2007, in St. Albert, Alta. Heartfelt thanks are extended to those in Central Church, Vancouver, B.C., and Westminster Church, Barrie, Ont., who lovingly prayed for Elaine and Ralph as they looked forward to welcoming a child. ■

# Real Hospitality

People seek an authentic message congruent with life.

BY REV. DR. J. H. HANS KOUWENBERG



**A**lthough I live in Abbotsford with almost 100 churches, seven of which have an attendance of 1,500 to 5,000 on a weekend, I also live in British Columbia where 30 per cent of the population does not believe in God and 60 per cent does not attend church or any other faith institution at any time during the year.

A number of people have asked me what I think is the greatest challenge that faces the Presbyterian Church in Canada. My answer is another question: are we able to lead anyone who does not believe in anything that smacks of some kind of religion or spirituality to believe in God? It is an important question for every Christian church worth their "salt and light" to consider. In this post-Christendom, post-modern age, will the Christian church persist? Does the Christian church have anything to say to the new, emerging generations and cultures? It's not only a question of whether our children and grandchildren will have faith, but also whether our neighbours will.

There is no doubt in my mind we've entered a time of massive paradigm shift. Current generations think, act and believe much differently than the earlier generations to which we "oldie goldies" belong. People in the past were committed to the church, or to its programs; now people are more

interested in relationships or finding a hospitable community. Long-term denominational loyalty is gone; people are more interested in short-term commitments, missions or causes.

Fortunate is the church with enough expertise to offer support groups to different generations, or to focus on marriage or divorce care, or on other family issues, or on local or global social issues. Every church today must offer entry level courses, such as Alpha, for easier consideration of the Christian faith, as well as intermediate level discipleship courses for growth in one's faith, and advanced level leadership development courses for service in the church, community and the world if they're to minister effectively to the different kinds of people who may happen to cross the doorstep of their building.

I asked a 20-something parishioner what he looked for most in the church. Number one on his list was "real hospitality." He didn't want to be centered out as a visitor; he only wanted some people in the church to notice he was new, and perhaps to invite him out for coffee or have him over to their home for a meal. Just being warm and friendly at church during the initial greeting, or at the coffee hour after the service, wouldn't cut it.

Number two on his list was a church that was making a "real difference" in the community. Is your church engaged in any meaningful contact with the local situation in which it finds itself, or somewhere else in the "global village" in which we all live? People want to be involved in meaningful causes. They will spend time and money for something that makes a difference in this world.

And, he said, he was looking for

"real, orthodox, biblical preaching and teaching," which would help him experience God's presence and apply the message of the Bible to the issues of his day. He would listen to a pastor who was authentic and whose message was congruent with life.

In my last trip through southern Ontario, I saw a brief video of some Canadian young people and their current concerns, produced by Shauna Simmonds of MakeYouThink Studios. This young woman seems to have found out what young adults want from their churches. Here is the list: community, authenticity, mentorship, passionate leaders, interactive environment, involvement, relevant engagement, intellectual challenge and a technology and internet presence. (The video is available from the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada at 1-800-302-3362 or [www.evangelicalfellowship.ca](http://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca)).

I lament the recent departure of people from Trinity Presbyterian in Oro, Ont., because we have lost gifts, abilities and experience which connected us with a younger generation, including those who do not believe in God, that we can ill afford to lose. I regret, rather than condemn, that they have shifted their theological stance and ecclesiology to suit what Martin Marty called the "baptistification" of society (*Christianity Today*, Sept. 2, 1983). We need every gift and passion we can muster to reach our generation for Christ. ■

Hans Kouwenberg



Church World Services is a Geneva-based non-governmental agency with offices in many countries, including Pakistan and Afghanistan. Last year, the *Record's* Andrew Faiz and PWS&D's Guy Smagghe were hosted in both countries by CWS.

The agency, working with Action By Churches Together (ACT) and through its support network (which includes the PCC) provides a variety of services throughout Pakistan. These include a refugee camp for those displaced by the October 2005 earthquake (seen here).

In December Marvin Parvez, director of CWS Pakistan/Afghanistan sent the following letter. Our prayers are with them.

*Dear Friends: As I write these lines to you from Islamabad, the government moves the body of Ms. Bhutto from the hospital to her ancestral village in Sindh Province (down south and five hours drive from Karachi) in the middle of the night and against the wishes of Ms. Bhutto's husband (a very typical move by government to control the violent reaction across the country by PPP workers, supporters and other groups against the current setup).*

*Many of you have supported us in the last decade during some very difficult times we have faced in this country/region, but this is the biggest tragedy and one that we might not recover from as a country and nation.*

*We are truly grateful for your prayers and support during these very difficult times ... now is the time we need your prayers and support the most.*

*In the last few hours hundreds of police stations, government buildings, vehicles and trains have been attacked and burned down and it will take time to get the actual number of dead.*

*Most of the opposition parties have called for a national government and cancellation of elections and the UN Security Council will meet in the next few hours to discuss what next for this nuclear armed country threatened by Islamic militants.*

*All our team members are safe and we have closed offices and suspended operations for the time being.*

*We will keep you updated and once again from the team here thanks for your concern and support.*

*Peace,*

*Marvin Parvez, CWS*





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# PRESBYTERIAN Record



# Growing Pains

There is no growth  
without change,  
no change  
without conflict.





Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down,  
I suppose that even the whole world would not have room  
for the books that would be written. John 21:25





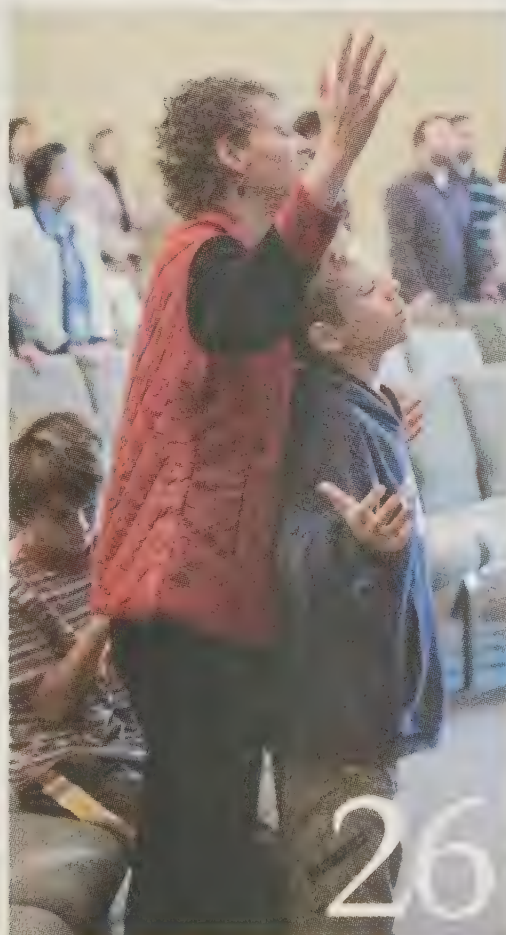
# Taking Pains to Grow

For churches there is no growth without change,  
no change without conflict.



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On the Cover: Illustration by  
Michelle Thompson/agoodson



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# OPEN TO LOVE

Growing requires the  
right motivation.

BY DAVID HARRIS

Jesus wouldn't have said things like "take your light out from underneath that basket and let it shine" or "move into all the world and make disciples" if he was content with a church plan of maintenance or gradual decline. God wants our churches growing and alive.

That quote from Andrew Allison, minister at St. Paul's, Leaskdale, Ont., this month is about as succinct a comment on church growth (and decline) as you'll find.

Over the past several months, we've published a steady stream of articles focusing one way or another on creating healthy growing churches. All of them make excellent points about building and maintaining faithful communities. But it would be a mistake to read them as simple recipes for success.

As John-Peter Smit says in his article this month, the danger is the "if-only-we-had-the-right-something" conversation. 'If only we had the right minister or the right location or the right musician or the right worship style or the right theology then everything would be right.' This is a dangerous road to travel: It seeks simplistic solutions to complex issues."

That doesn't mean there aren't some basics that are found in every engaging church community. The real challenge is that most of those basics fall within the responsibility of each and every one of us as members of a community of faith.

In many ways the most difficult, yet most important thing is that we have to be open and vulnerable to receiving God's love. It's not easy. The whole history of God's interaction with humans as evidenced in the Bible could be boiled down to God trying to get us to understand that He loves us.

Ultimately, that was the whole purpose of Jesus' ministry. I think we sometimes hear "God so loved the world ..." as impersonal. The world. Everyone. But it really means, God so loved me and God so loved you and God so loved our neighbour.

During Lent Christians traditionally think about repentance. But saying sorry to someone you fear is different than saying sorry to someone you love—and who loves you. If God were only to be feared, we'd say sorry to avoid punishment.



Saying sorry to a God who loves us is about opening ourselves up to experience all the good that God wants for us and being open to see the need for change.

Filled with the Spirit of love, we don't have to "try" to be friendly to people at church, whether newcomers or stalwarts. We "are" friendly because we want to share God's love.

"We are not primarily in the business of building the Presbyterian Church; we are sharing what Jesus has done in our own lives," says Smit. "If we have no story to tell, if Jesus has not changed our lives, then it is next to impossible for him to change the lives of others through us."

And the congregation at St. Paul's, Leaskdale, is proof that it can be done. Here's what Marion Schaffer had to say after attending morning worship at St. Paul's. "What I experienced included a relevant openhearted message and the sharing of personal journeys of faith from many who were present all wrapped up in an atmosphere of welcoming acceptance."

Great expectations, however, imply change. Growth implies change. And, as our cover says: Growing Pains. It's best read as describing an action: growing hurts, growing causes pain. Not bad pain, but the pain of maturing from childhood into adulthood.

And as every parent (and child) knows, that pain is only bearable when it is experienced in an atmosphere of unconditional love. Otherwise, it is the dreadful pain of fear.

As recent research has shown, when we are motivated by fear, we focus on just one thing: escape. But we lose our perspective. We cannot see other options. We just head for what we hope is the light at the end of the tunnel. And if we are wrong ...

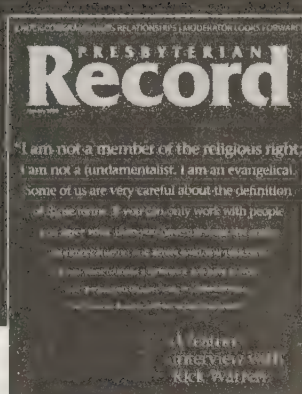
If, on the other hand, we are motivated by love and open to change, there is no wrong choice. ■

David Harris



# Letters

letters@presbyterianrecord.ca



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## Some uplifting articles, some not

*Re Full Time Cheerleader, January*

Yes, the lord will always be with Patricia Schneider as she mourns and grieves the passing of her beloved husband. How wonderful it is to know the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal friend and Saviour of our lives. How I wish some of the other published articles in the *Record* were as uplifting and true as this one, not slanderous and full of untruths ...

The article by Rev. Laurence De Wolfe (Progressive Lectionary, January) astounds me. Jesus and the Father are one and always have been one. God sent His only begotten Son to this earth when He saw how sinful we all were. He was sent as a baby, to become a man and to die for each of us, that by the shedding of His blood, we would have forgiveness of sins and an eternal home in heaven with Him. I am shocked that a Presbyterian minister would write such an article.

GENEVIEVE WHYTE, ORO STATION, ONT.

## Something different

*Re November editorial and related articles and letters*

I happen to agree with Mr. Nieuwhof's theology, and disagree with where Presbyterian theology is and appears to be going. I also believe that a year is plenty of time for presbytery to pray on a matter and come to a conclusion. But this does not forgive Mr. Nieuwhof of poaching members of the Presbyterian Church. I am employed by the Presbyterian Church and have been for almost the last six years. This year I left my congrega-

tion and all knew it's because God has called me to something different. Any are glad to join the ministry my wife and I are starting, but we are leaving alone. One should not use their position to split churches.

ANTHONY VINK, CALGARY

I wonder if the practice of offering critiques of the ministry and motives of particular ministers in our denomination, through the pages of the *Record*, is going to become a regular feature of the magazine? I will supply the editor with names and contact information of parishioners who could offer their criticisms of my ministry, if more material is being sought and the focus broadening beyond Mr. Nieuwhof. With some fine articles of late—such as the pieces by Chuck Congram and Alex McLeod in the last issue—it seems a pity to spend more ink, space and time pointing fingers and tearing down individual congregations and/or clergy. But if this is the newest pursuit for the *Record*, I would find it difficult to sit back and watch others under the exposing searchlight while I hide in the shadows.

REV. CHRISTINE O'REILLY, PORT FRANKS, ONT.

## Boldness and courage

As a new member of St. Andrew's, Penticton, B.C., I applaud Rev. Colin Cross for his boldness and courage. The Walk to Bethlehem (December 2007) was a way to connect with people from all walks even in our own church. People worked side by side for Christ's sake not their own. They spent an evening in the cold to bring warmth into hearts of all who came. It

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## Pontius' Puddle



was uplifting and exciting to be a part of. I look forward to see what God has next for our St. Andrew's in the heart of Penticton.

MARY TOBIN, PENTICTON, B.C.

### The complete picture

*Re Mark Tremblay letter, December*

Was Luther fishing for laughs when he posted his 95 theses? Or why should it mark an erosion of tolerance and diversity of opinion for people to express an opinion other than Zander Dunn's? (Letters, March) Isn't this kind of open expression of ideas what tolerance and diversity are all about? The alternative would be a denomination in which nothing was ever challenged. I'm sure that's not what Tremblay would want.

Tremblay seems to have forgotten that, although the Bible speaks about faith as an attitude of trust, it also speaks about "the faith" which has a particular revelatory content. Disregarding that content may not undermine faith as an attitude (which can have virtually anything as its object) but it does undermine "the faith" which we are told was once for all handed down to the saints.

Tremblay also speaks about things not making theological or philosophical sense. What I find nonsensical is the suggestion that one can believe in Jesus apart from believing certain things about Jesus. Certainly a belief in Jesus has to begin with a belief in the fact that He's real. It also has to

include a belief in the fact that He lives and can still make a difference in the lives of people today. When people talk about "believing in Jesus," apart from needing to "believe things about Jesus," what's really being said are some things about Jesus which they are prepared to believe and some facts which they aren't. Let's be honest about that rather than trying to pretend that you can have a Christian faith devoid of content.

Finally, Tremblay suggests that the absence of any discussion of Jesus' birth in Mark or John must be a great concern to those who put so much weight in the idea of a virgin birth. Yet the argument works both ways. By Tremblay's logic, it must also be a great concern to those who put no weight in a virgin birth that Matthew and Luke both include it. The question for us to consider is whether it's more likely that we've been given four gospels so that we can safely ignore parts of some or so that, by looking at the four of them together, we can know that we have the complete picture?

DUNCAN CAMERON, SCARBOROUGH, ONT.

### With people like Faiz ...

*Re Jesus Good, January*

Andrew Faiz quoted Bruxy Cavey and linked him with a bunch of different authors who are anti-Christian, and I think that was completely unfair. I don't know if he read Bruxy's whole book or if he ever heard him preach (he only references the preface

of the book), but I personally believe that Cavey has a profoundly prophetic voice that the Church needs to hear. Bruxy Cavey is not anti-Christian; he simply wants those who call themselves Christians to actually follow Jesus. He believes in the importance of Christian community and his preaching is always based on the Scriptures. He is passionate about helping irreligious people encounter the living Christ, rather than rejecting Him because of bad experiences they've had with the Church. So please do not ignore (condemn) his message because it confronts the Church of its hypocrisy. I believe that doing so would be equivalent to rejecting a modern day prophet of the living God.

REV. CURTIS PETERS, SWIFT CURRENT, SASK.

With managing editors like Andrew Faiz, who needs enemies? I'm not entirely clear about the point, if any, of Faiz's article. It does seem clear that Faiz is as enamored of the word "zeitgeist" as he is of the parenthesis keys on his computer. If his point is that the traditional denominations in North America representing "religion" face a prevailing culture that is skeptical of their compassion and sincerity, then that is worth discussing. If his point is also that this perception is created exclusively by influential writers, then that also is worth discussing.

Where I have considerable problems is with his ill-informed and grossly unfair characterization of the



ministry and writings of Bruxy Cavey. Lumping Bruxy Cavey's views in with a rank heretic such as Bishop Spong or an antagonist to Christian faith such as Christopher Hitchens amounts to little better than a drive-by shooting at the reputation of one of Christianity's most effective communicators in Canada today.

The Meeting House is not non-denominational, but rather a Brethren in Christ congregation. If one were to read Cavey's book *The End of Religion*, one would find that Cavey takes considerable pains to be clear what he means when employing the term "religion." Cavey's critique of "religion" contains virtually the same warnings as St. Paul provides in II Timothy 3:5 to avoid those "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Or the same model as James 1:27 (quoted in the book), "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspeckled from the world." I can also confirm from personal experience that the Jesus presented in Cavey's preaching is not some dumbed-down "Jesus good" as implied in Faiz's title, but a highly orthodox and high view of Christ as Lord and Saviour. Finally, I can also confirm that the ministry at The Meeting House emphasizes a rigorous discipleship that would be a credit to any church in our own denomination and might well be the

best antidote to the "zeitgeist" Faiz appears to be concerned with.

If we are truly concerned about the credibility in our society of our Christian witness, maybe our examination should be focused inward. Maybe we should be challenging ourselves in terms of whether what we do in our congregations truly reflects Christ to the communities around us. If Faiz wishes to continue to look for "enemies," maybe he should consider the wisdom of Walt Kelly's Pogo: "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

**ALISTAIR MOLLISON, THORNBURY, ONT.**

### deWolfe leads

Christian scholars (John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg and others) have been informing the laity about new discoveries and revised observations about the historical Jesus. The word from most pulpits appears not to have kept up with emerging research. Ministers of the Word seem to prefer the safety of traditional views in spite of their education to the contrary. Thankfully, Rev. Laurence DeWolfe (Progressive Lectionary, January) has broken with the pack in helping us re-consider Jesus' "son-ship."

**ROD TOMLINSON, CALGARY**

### Also,

On our website—[www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)—more defense of Bruxy Cavey, lament for Advent and memories of Camp Glen Mhor. ■

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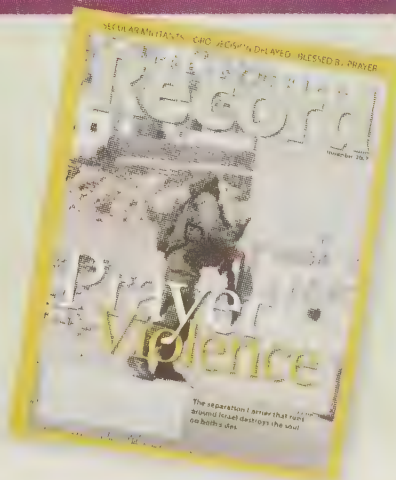
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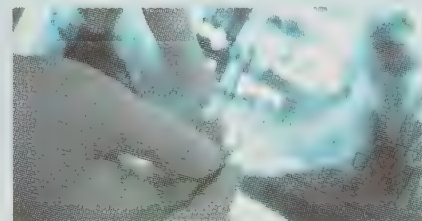
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# People & Places

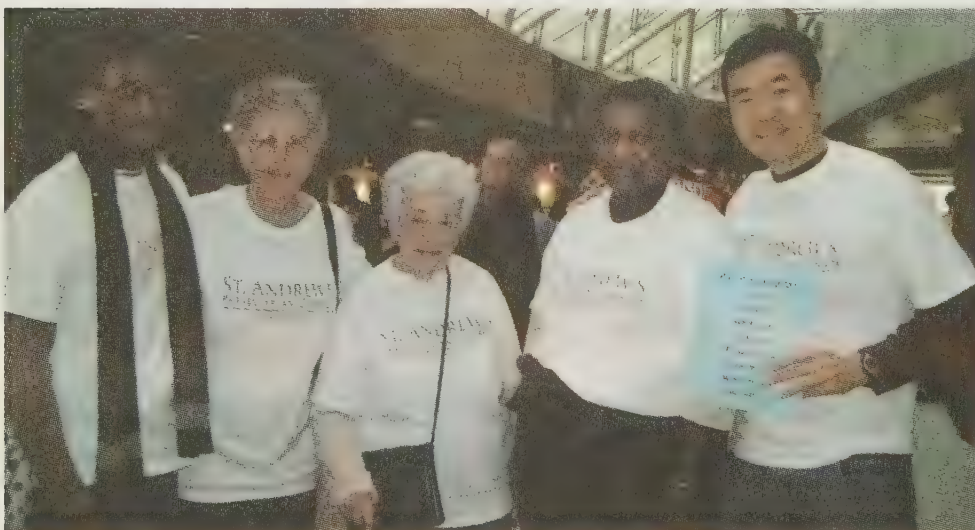
For more People & Places submissions, please visit our website:  
[www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)



People and Places is always impressed by the imagination and determination of church folks to help others. Peter Wyminga (left) of St. Andrew's, Guelph, Ont., came up with the poetry contest (which was featured in the February *Record*); Elaine Forgo, of Knox, Burlington, Ont., was the winning poet; Rev. John Borthwick is proud of the church he serves, which raised \$15,000 to give to Alexander MacDonald, guest speaker and PWS&D communication assistant. And, Karen Dimock, student minister, took it all in. To quote Forgo: "What a great opportunity to make things whole."



That's a Happy Birthday Jesus cake—such simple, obvious and yet brilliant and imaginative ways of celebrating the Gospels!—at St. Andrew's, Bowmanville, Ont., which is cut every year after the Sunday School Christmas Pageant. Doreen Gilroy baked the cake and was helped by Wiseman (John), Joseph (Duncan), Shepherds (Orrie and John) and an Angel (Kaitlyn). Now all together: "... Are you one? Are you two? Are you ..."



Some members of St. Andrew's, Humber Heights, Etobicoke, Ont., participated in the annual Walk for Memories at Roy Thomson Hall to honour eight members of the congregation who have Alzheimers. They also managed to raise \$1,800 for the Alzheimer Society of Toronto. From left: Nene Osutei, Linda Bleue, Janette Slater, Vida Bosompem and Rev. Paul Kang. Also present at the walk: Margaret Henderson and Alex Webster. More photos, plus celebrating 30 years of Don Moffatt, on our website.





For 11 years, Bruce and Pat McKechnie (he's far left, she's far right in the photograph) have been sponsoring a breakfast at Knox, Kincardine, Ont. The November event raised \$5,000 which the couple delivered personally in January, to the Mulanje Mission Hospital in Malawi. The 182-bed hospital is run under the auspices of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. For more photos see our website.



Ron Gable, former clerk of session at Knox, Georgetown, Ont., brought in the main course at the annual Robbie Burns Dinner, followed by former minister Rev. Peter Barrow and current minister Rev. Dr. James Cooper. Needless to say, the meal was magnificent and there were Highland Dancers. Photograph: Rose Colter.

## Had cake lately?

See [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca) for instructions on how to submit to People and Places.

## Also on our website:

Fifty years of Twilight in Rockwood; cake and hats in Montreal West; the cutest cow ever in Barney's River; two cakes in Sudbury; wheelchair access at Albion Gardens, Etobicoke; how a birthday aids a food bank in Burns, Ont.; Malawi mission in Dunnville; filling a stable in Hillsburgh; the Moderator's mom's birthday; more Haggis, in Swansea; a 65th wedding anniversary in Tatamagouche; backpacks for children escaping abuse in Welland; and, a 90th birthday at Wychwood, Davenport.





It started, like so many things, with a personal connection: A member at Knox, Agincourt, Toronto, has a brother-in-law serving in Afghanistan. The congregation decided to adopt him—they took this photo, the kids made the “Hi Bob” sign. With cards at Christmas and his birthday and, little notes of encouragement, Soldier Bob will always know somebody is thinking of him. Knox, Agincourt, would love to see other churches Adopt-A-Soldier.

# Presbyterians Continue Sharing

Givings speak for the voiceless in the world.

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

PRESBYTERIANS SHARING ... contributions were down slightly from 2006, but have surpassed givings for the three years before that. The final tally for 2007 is \$8,734,120—with almost \$2 million of that received during the first two weeks of January.

The final figure is \$23,457 (0.26 per cent) less than contributions in 2006, but Karen Plater, associate secretary for stewardship, is thrilled with the outcome. “This figure represents another year of congregations working hard to support the mission and ministries that we do together as the Presbyterian Church in Canada,” Plater told the

*Record*, thanking congregations and individuals for supporting the church in this way. “No matter what the circumstances, all of the people I have talked to expressed a commitment to reaching outside the boundaries of their local congregations and communities to do mission and ministry, and in the end, that is what Presbyterians Sharing ... is all about.”

Although not mandatory, all congregations are expected to give to Presbyterians Sharing ... which supports the work of the church through things like training leaders, helping international partners, growing inno-

vative youth ministries, supporting healing and reconciliation ministries, and “speaking for the voiceless in our country and our world.” Expected quotas are assigned depending on the congregation’s dollar base, which is money raised for all congregational purposes in a given year, minus funds collected for Presbyterians Sharing and other mission givings, as well as money used for debt repayment. A formula, on a graduated scale, is then applied to the resulting dollar base. The amount is approved (and possibly changed) by the congregation and presbytery before being accepted. ■ —AM



# Leaders' Tour Begins

AN ABORIGINAL and church leaders' tour is scheduled for March 1-10, and will give participants a chance to visit community programs, and meet with media, local government, church and first nations representatives along the way.

"I hope we'll get a deeper appreciation of the schools and really understand why they left a legacy that continues to have an impact on the aboriginal community today," said Lori Ransom, the Presbyterian Church's healing and reconciliation animator.

Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg, Moderator of the 2007 General Assembly, along with Ransom, will represent the PCC on the tour which will stop in Ottawa, Vancouver, Saskatoon and Winnipeg. Full details are not yet finalized, but information on how Presbyterians can get involved will be distributed to local congregations through their presbyteries. They can also visit [www.rememberingthechildren.ca](http://www.rememberingthechildren.ca) to follow the tour as it travels. The national website—[www.presbyterian.ca](http://www.presbyterian.ca)—will also carry updates.

March 3rd is the official launch of the tour in Ottawa and will be hosted

by the United Church (each of the four denominations will take the lead in one location). The Presbyterians will lead in Winnipeg, where they hope to take the tour to Anishinabe and Flora House—the church's aboriginal outreach centres.

Anglican and Catholic representatives will also take part, along with the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. The tour is in preparation for the federal government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a five-year endeavour that will provide former residential school students with an opportunity to share their individual experiences. The commission is supposed to be launched this year, though the federal government has not yet released a date.

"I'm really excited about the potential for this tour to draw attention to the commission," said Ransom. "This is really the first time a major G8 country has actually looked at its colonial past and reflected as a nation on what the consequences were of that past and how we can reconcile and overcome those consequences. I'm sure we'll all learn things we didn't know before." ■ —AM

## Mission Trips This Year

DEADLINES ARE APPROACHING for this year's mission trip opportunities, which cover a wide range of locations and mission work. Confirmed trips are:

- XVII International AIDS Conference and Ecumenical Pre-conference in Mexico City, Mexico, July 30-August 9, adults and youth
- Guatemala Missions and Ministries, May 5-15, members of the BC Synod and Synodical
- World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel, 3-month placement any time, 25 years or older

- Youth in Mission India (June 20-July 6); Taiwan (June 26-July 12); Louisiana (May 23-June 1); Prince Rupert and Vancouver (2 weeks in August TBA); Peace River Presbytery (July 25-August 23)

Presbyterians can also listen to Mary Helen Garvin (missionary to Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Malawi) who is speaking in British Columbia and Edmonton between March 1 and 9.

For applications and more information, including costs, go to [www.presbyterian.ca/experiencemission/trips](http://www.presbyterian.ca/experiencemission/trips).

■ —AM

## BUILDING HOPE

**I could hear the sound of happy voices**

when Brian, the computer supervisor, picked up the phone at Flora House. It was -30° and the computer club had just started. With 6 computers and a group of 10-15 kids, Brian was a busy man. Each preteen has an hour on the computer to complete a computer activity, do school assignments or



**WICM**

access the internet. "What happens if there is no computer available?" I asked. "Well," said Brian, "the kids play games and draw, but I would really like to augment the program by teaching how computers function." "What would that cost?" I asked. Brian did some math. "Well," he said, "we already run the program for about 66¢ per child per evening. If we had any additional funds, we could really expand the program."

**Can you help? Your donation of \$60 would help make this happen at Flora House.**

**Winnipeg Inner City Missions Of The Presbyterian Church In Canada**

P.O. Box 2444, Station Main  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4A7

**Flora House** 204-586-5494

**Anishinabe Fellowship Centre**  
204-942-8682

Charitable registration: #862942554RR0001





# The Helping Team

A new resource connects people, places and programs.

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

A NEW DEPARTMENT has been launched at national offices, designed to quickly and easily provide resources and leadership, answer questions, and otherwise aid congregations and individuals in their work. Dubbed The Vine Helpline: Connecting People, Places and Programs, the department was officially launched in mid-January, and uses volunteers, national staff, and resource people stationed across Canada.

"I think people sensed the need to do something different, but they didn't see a clear way to do it," said Dorothy Henderson, Vine's team leader, talking about the history of Vine's creation. "This is one way to think outside the box. It gives the church a chance to do something different, and I hope it gives others the courage to change."

Henderson describes Vine as "providing another avenue into the national office, where people will find friendly, prompt, helpful service, with trained volunteers who are like a friendly, open church secretary."

It is hoped that the 20 volunteers will be able to field 50 per cent of calls coming into the church, with the other half referred to staff members, freeing up staff to do more resource development work. Web communication is also expected to grow and be a main source for acquiring resources.

**"This is one way to think outside the box. It gives the church a chance to do something different"**

Volunteers are overseen by David Phillips, who will be familiar to Presbyterians as the individual who helped congregations enact the Leading with Care policy. Along with Phillips and Henderson, other staff include Matt Donnelly, information manager; Grace-ann McIntyre, finances and resource support; and Joro Lee, resource support as well as design and promotions.

Henderson hopes to also have up to 100 leaders stationed across the country who can be called by congre-

gations, presbyteries and synods for workshops, resources, and other assistance. They will work with (and include) regional staff who are already in place, and will be organized by region and area of expertise. She also hopes Vine will become an important resource for laity, equipping them to lead, and freeing clergy from the need to be "all things to all people."

The idea for Vine has been percolating since 1989 at the national level, since 1991 at General Assembly, and later in 1995-6 within the Life and Mission Agency, when calls came for less hierarchy, clearer communication, and more availability of staff at the national level. In 2007, as the LMA informally discussed how communication across the entire church could be improved, numerous staff changes at national offices became a catalyst for action.

"There have been people who have been restless for change for a long time," said Henderson. "We're trying to create a climate where people can do their best work. It's a tough time to be a local church. They need all the support they can get."

The Vine Helpline will be evaluated in two years' time by an advisory committee, who will then report to the LMA. To access The Vine Helpline, call 1-866-642-2830. ■ —AM



# A Rare Opportunity

Project Ploughshares intern learns to make a difference.

ADAM PARSONS WAS THE 2007 recipient of the peace and human security internship program with Project Ploughshares, an ecumenical peace centre of the Canadian Council of Churches and sponsored by the Presbyterian Church. A member of Gale, Elmira, Ont., Parsons was completing his Masters degree in international relations when he heard of the opportunity, and contacted Ploughshares immediately to find out more.

"I know many students who are trying to get on with this type of organization, and it's incredibly difficult to do," Parsons told the *Record*. "And they've given me an amazing amount of responsibility."

After immersing himself for the first two weeks in Ploughshares' resources and materials which informed him of the extensive and complicated work the agency does, Parsons was given "complete ownership" of a writing project that reports on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,

and is working on the preparations related to the conference where the paper will be presented. He has also been studying and reporting on Canada's obligations to the UN's program of action on small arms and light weapons.

"When I came into this I wondered, do organizations like Ploughshares really make a difference? And I've found out that yes, they do," said Parsons. "They consult with government, and have a direct influence on public policy, and are great at community outreach and education. They make a considerable contribution to Canadian society."

Upon finishing—his placement ends in May—Parsons hopes to find a job with an GO that deals with peace and conflict studies.

Applications are now being accepted for the 2008 internship which begins in September and is located in Waterloo, Ont. It will be the second internship in a series of three. The series is made possible through



undesigned bequests to the PCC. Applicants must be university graduates, and members or adherents of the PCC. The deadline for applications is May 16, and the eight-month term provides a \$1,400 monthly stipend.

For more details, contact Stephen Allen at Justice Ministries at (416) 441-1111 x256 or [sallen@presbyterian.ca](mailto:sallen@presbyterian.ca). Visit [www.ploughshares.ca](http://www.ploughshares.ca) to learn more about Project Ploughshares. Parsons said he would be happy to talk about his experiences with internship hopefuls. He can be reached at [aparsons@ploughshares.ca](mailto:aparsons@ploughshares.ca). ■—AM

## WMS Cuts Back

THE WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY has decided to cut back its grant to regional staff beginning in 2009. The yearly grant will be \$200,000, representing a 50 per cent cut in funds. The change is mainly due to decreased givings resulting from dwindling membership.

"Our financial situation has changed, and the nature of WMS-related work with regional staff has changed," said Rev. Sarah Kim, the WMS' executive director. "And we

have decided that we have to decrease the amount we contribute."

The WMS first decided to cover half of the regional staffing costs (see article on page 23) back in 1992, when area education consultants (who were employees of the WMS) combined with other synod staff to form the current regional staffing model.

Givings from WMS presbyterials in recent years have fallen steadily to just below an annual average of \$700,000. A grant of \$400,000 for regional staff is decreasingly viable given the WMS's other commitments.

"We had a bigger budget then," said Kim. "In some areas, members are increasing, but mostly, there is a decrease. And each year, bit by bit,

there is a decrease in givings.

"During the six years I've been here, there's been about a \$150,000 decrease."

The decision will go to the General Assembly this June, which marks the end of a five-year commitment the WMS made to fund regional staff at the 1992 rate. The WMS and the Life and Mission Agency (which also funds regional staff) hired a consultant to review the regional staffing model, and both groups are waiting for the consultant's report before sharing other recommendations they will bring to the assembly. The WMS has about 300 groups and approximately 5,400 members across the country. ■—AM



# A Life of Ministry

John Johnston served God in God's world.



THE INDEFATIGABLE Rev. Dr. John Johnston died on January 10, seven weeks after suffering major injuries in a vehicle accident. He was 80. About 1,000 people attended his memorial service a week later at McNab, Hamilton, Ont.

At that service, his son, Rev. Dr. Andrew Johnston, minister at St. Andrew's, Ottawa, said, "Ministry was [my father's] life, and a great strength of his ministry was his personal faith communicated personally.

"As a Christian, his first priority was Christian community. This is where he began. But from the church he went out to serve God in God's world.

"He was the old stock Canadian who embraced the newest of Canadians, the citizen of North America who took up the

causes of Palestinian and Sudanese, the traditional Presbyterian who understood that the Church of Christ was much larger and for many years served as president of Hamilton Council of Churches."

John Johnston founded churches in Prince George, B.C., Ottawa and Nigeria. He was a driving force behind the Presbyterian Archives and the National Presbyterian Museum, both of which he served tirelessly, even taking calls for the museum from his bed in his last week. While a minister at McNab, Hamilton for three decades he also served on various community boards and committees.

Donations in remembrance of Johnston can be made to the Leprosy Mission and the National Presbyterian Museum. ■

## Guildwood Deal Causes Concern

GUILDWOOD COMMUNITY Presbyterian Church, Toronto, has had protesters walking its front lawn thanks to a 20-year lease agreement with Bell Mobility that will see a 10-storey relay signal tower erected on the church's property. Residents are worried about electromagnetic signals emitted from the tower, which will be in the middle of a residential neighbourhood.

"I would have liked more community consultation with the church and with Bell," said local city councilor Paul Ainslie. "But I can see that when churches are trying to look for funds, it's hard to say no when an offer like this is made. I can understand their position."

A public meeting was held in December to discuss the issue, and another meeting, with representatives from Guildwood, the City of Toronto,

Bell, Health Canada and Industry Canada, is being planned, though details were not yet finalized when the *Record* went to press.

Residents were informed of the plans last November, and protested in front of Guildwood just two weeks later. However, the community likely has little leverage in this case, as it is up to Industry Canada to decide on the tower's placement.

Jason Laszlo, associate director of media relations at Bell Canada, said the process complies with Industry Canada's 2008 guidelines for informing communities about new building sites. He also noted that as many as 80 per cent of Torontonians own a wireless phone, and that demands for better wireless service in the Guildwood area prompted the plans for the new tower.

Les Fincham, co-convenor of Guildwood's finance and maintenance committee, helped draft an information document for the congregation. It notes that Bell must adhere to Health Canada and Industry Canada regulations regarding signal towers.

"The church and its congregation are part of the community too and we would not knowingly put either church staff or the members of our congregations in a dangerous or compromising position," states the document.

All money received through the lease agreement will be dedicated to Guildwood's mission and outreach program.

"It's a very amicable community, and it's unfortunate that this issue is putting members at odds," said Ainslie. ■ —AM



# Sealing a Moment in Time

WORSHIP MATERIALS from 190 congregations from every province in Canada will now be sealed in the Presbyterian Church's national archives for 50 years, preserving a "moment in time" for the future church.

"I hope this will be a valuable mine of information to tell people how we in the Presbyterian Church in Canada worshipped right now," said Rev. Dr.

**Rennie is surprised and pleased with the response, hoping the materials will also give a sense of the church's social concern**

Fred Rennie, the man who devised the Moment in Time project, and secretary of the Experimental Fund, which funded it. PCC archivists Kim Arnold and Bob Anger helped administer the project.

Rennie is surprised and pleased with the response, and said he hopes the materials will also give a sense of the church's social concern; whether congregations looked outward to help others, or were content with worrying about their own four walls. "It's also nice to look back and see what the preachers were preaching!"



Rev. Dr. Fred Rennie and archivist Bob Anger examine Moments in Time before they are sealed.

Congregations submitted orders of service, church newsletters, sermons, congregation demographics, annual reports, music and hymns, photographs, bulletins, and videotapes of Sunday services.

Rennie hopes the project will also have taught congregations how important it is to "acquire and preserve" their records—something

the archives has urged at the last few General Assemblies. Transferring records to microfilm, which can be done by the archives with the originals returned to the congregation, is the method of choice.

Though the project has officially ended, congregations can still submit materials and they will be added to the collection. ■—AM

**"Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God."**



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### **Year of Paul**

ENI—Turkey's small Roman Catholic community hopes to mark the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Paul of Tarsus by reopening a church at his birthplace. They also hope to improve the status of the country's Christian minorities.

"This anniversary is certain to attract large numbers of pilgrims, who will obviously need a church where they can feel at home and pray," Bishop Luigi Padovese said. "The local authorities are aware of their town's significance for Christians and proud that one of its citizens was once a key figure. On the other hand, they aren't prepared for an increase of religious tourism with its special requirements," said the 60-year-old Franciscan bishop who belongs to a seven-member bishops' conference that includes leaders of Turkey's Armenian, Syriac and Chaldean Catholic communities.

Pope Benedict XVI has declared 2008 the Year of St. Paul.

Most of Turkey's 71 million inhabitants are Sunni Muslims.

### **Mixed-up Confusion**

ENI—A proposal to make religion a required subject in the first seven years of school has triggered severe criticism from religious and secular quarters in Bulgaria—officially atheist in the years of communist rule but in which most of the 7.7 million population profess allegiance to the orthodox church.

The proposal focuses on educating children about religions rather than instruction in a single faith. It proposes teaching children about ethical issues including cloning and abortion.

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church's position is that children of Orthodox families should study Orthodox Christianity, children of Muslims should study Islam and children of atheists should be able to study a subject of the kind proposed by the public council which he called "a mixed-up history of religions."

Psychologists and parents' associations rejected the proposals, while a sociology professor said there was no point in the proposal because only 25 per cent of Bulgarians were believers.

### **Urging Peace**

ENI—WCC general secretary Rev. Samuel Kobia, a Kenyan, said in January he hoped Kenya "will overcome the prevailing situation and that the churches will play an important part in speeding up that time."

Both global and Kenyan religious leaders have been pressing incumbent President Mwai Kibaki, leader of the Party of National Unity, who was declared the winner in the December elections, and Raila Odinga, of the Orange Democratic Movement, who says the election was rigged, to settle their dispute.

Former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who is helping to mediate in the dispute, opened talks between the two sides on January 29.

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, visited the country soon after the elections and met leaders from both sides at the behest of the Nairobi-based All Africa Conference of Churches in an effort to mediate.

### **Drunken Media**

ENI—Lithuanian bishops are clashing with the country's media mavens over their support of laws restricting advertisements for alcoholic beverages.

Business and media groups, bishops' claim, had "decided to encourage social destruction and instigate public hounding of politicians" due to an anticipated fall in profits triggered by new laws which put

constraints on liquor advertisements.

After the laws took effect in January, some television channels cancelled highly popular live basketball broadcasts, claiming that the law forbids showing players wearing T-shirts with drink producers' logos.

Recent statistics show that the production of the alcoholic beverage cider, consumed mainly by young people, has increased by 250 per cent over five years. Also, over the same period, the number of alcohol poisoning cases among the young has increased 15 times. The average age when young people first begin indulging in alcohol has slipped from 14 to 11 years.

### **Eat, Pray**

ENI—International organizations representing young people from all main Christian traditions say they are anguished at not being able to share in the Lord's Supper together.

"Many of us feel pain when we are not able to celebrate the Eucharist together and be united at the Lord's Table," the groups said in a joint statement to mark the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January. The message was sent to the heads of the Roman Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches, Christian World Communions and Regional Ecumenical Organizations.

The youth groups said in their statement they wanted to encourage young people worldwide to express Christian unity at local and national levels.

### **Rich with oil, but poverty high**

ENI—Church leaders in Nigeria say urgent government action is needed to tackle poverty in the West African nation that was ranked 158th out of 177 countries in the human development index of the United Nations Development Programme.

"Nigeria is blessed with abundant oil wealth, but her people are suffering in the midst of plenty," the Anglican bishop of Nigeria's commercial capital of Lagos, Adebayo Akinde, said in an interview.

Statistics from the Central Bank of Nigeria indicate that about 54 per cent of the nation's 140 million people live in poverty, many living on less than one US dollar a day. ■



# Teen Pregnancy Thing

*Juno* provides an opportunity to grind axes. BY ANDREW FAIZ

*Juno* is a well-made movie; it is modest, with a strong script, great dialogue, charming performances from charming actors and a great indie soundtrack. The movie is set in some ideal world, where love reigns and hope prevails. When the title character, a teenage girl, gets pregnant, her parents are supportive, her boyfriend waits on her and her friends rally around her. She gets a few dirty stares but the movie has no interest in the politics of teen pregnancy. It's a quiet story of a remarkable girl going through an extraordinary year.

But that hasn't kept the usual opportunists from bending this movie to their ideology. A columnist on *christianpost.com* states it plainly: "This indie hit provides plenty of openings for talking about values and choices and relationships." She also writes, "Yet rather than choosing abortion for a quick and private solution to her unwanted pregnancy, Juno ... chooses to take the messy situation and do what she can to redeem it."

A regular columnist on *bpnews.net* notches this up a little more. He acknowledges the movie is offensive, should have an R-rating and all that, but finds in it some redeeming qualities: "Movies aimed at teens tend to focus on being hip, irreverent or borderline pornographic. Most totally ignore the subject of responsibility. I am not sure if the filmmakers intended *Juno* to have such a thought-provoking message ... Whatever the case, the message of responsibility is present—and the majority of teens that will see *Juno* desperately need it."

I don't need to tell you this columnist is an older white male—you can spot that in his condescending tone. And that authoritative voice deems the movie has "a subtle but strong pro-life message of responsibility."

A commentator on *philcooke.com* adds, "Christians should have made this movie. It's interesting to note that two of the funniest (and best) movies [of 2007] were *Juno* and *Knocked Up*. Neither were 'Christian' movies by any stretch, but both promoted (in a Hollywood style) a pro-life message. Once again, the Christian creative community has now fallen a step behind in producing content that promotes the values we stand for (as followers of



Jesus) without coming off as cheesy, churchy, or irrelevant. Perhaps our picketing and right-wing political agendas aren't the best way ..."

*Christianity Today* adds its own coda to the discussion: "Also, it is worth noting that, when all is said and done, neither *Juno* nor her child end up in a traditional family, as such. But in a way, that just underscores the film's implicit pro-life sensibility. Life is life, and deserves to be nurtured, even—if not especially—when everything around it is broken."

Not to be outdone, pro-choicers are claiming *Juno* for their side: A columnist for *Slate.com* puts it this way: "[*Juno*] isn't moved by thoughts of the embryo's hallowed rights, however, but by a sense of her own autonomy. And for her, that doesn't mean a right to privacy, or to protect her body ("a fat suit I can't take off," she calls it at one point). *Juno* is driven by the chance to make her own unconventional choice. [Her parents] emerge as people who respect, and would do anything to support, their independent-minded kid."

So, how can the same movie be two opposite things at the same time? Well, it can't really—but, its charm and success give wags permission to grind their own axes. And, this is the nature of our modern-day rhetoric: it's all about the message track. The truth—whatever that might be—is not as important as the spin. And that's all this is: its spin. But, it's not spin to promote the movie; on the contrary, it's spin that uses the movie to promote one's own ideology.

So, the last word here should come from those closest to *Juno*'s age. They can be found on *christianteenforums.com*. Two comments leapt out at me: "I thought it was a cute movie. It was good overall except for the promoting teen pregnancy thing."

And—to prove that moral choices are complicated: "I hated it. Good thing I downloaded it, 'cause it would have sucked to actually have to pay to see that." ■

# Taking Pains to Grow

For churches there is no growth without change,  
no change without conflict. BY JOHN-PETER SMIT

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHELLE THOMPSON

**I** am sure God has a plan for my church. And, I'm pretty sure what we're doing isn't it." These are two of the three concerns I heard repeatedly while doing a congregational visit where I met with every member one-on-one. (It was a very small congregation and that was possible.) The third, however, was the punchline: "And, I'm the only one who feels that way."

As I reflected on this, I realized how often I have heard this articulated. In fact, I believe someone has expressed versions of these three concerns in every congregation I have visited. And I have visited a lot of congregations: I am the Congregational Development Consultant for the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda. I am (along with my fellow regional staff across the country) "on call" to congregations and presbyteries for all manner of things. We have explored stewardship, hospitality, change, stability and almost anything else you can imagine. I have also had the rare and precious experience of being with different congregations on a weekly basis. I meet with members, I meet in worship. I teach and train different groups and through all of this I get a snapshot of the denomination (or, at least my synod's corner of it) that most do not get to see. Yes, there are congregations and individuals making a real difference for the Kingdom of Heaven but, this mantra—that God does have a plan for

us (the denomination, or each of its individual churches), that we're not fulfilling the plan, and that we are alone in our struggles—may well be the prevalent theme.

## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

We have become obsessed with numbers: numbers of people and numbers of dollars. I am regularly asked to work with congregations to develop a viability plan. Usually, this is code for "how can we get enough people to pay our bills and keep our doors open." Clearly money and numbers of people are not unimportant, but when we become preoccupied only with these numbers, we tend to view guests only as sources of revenue and sources of energy to do the tasks we are tired of doing. In other words we are more concerned with what others can do for us than what we (as Christians) can do for others. The most extreme version of this was the congregation that spoke of newcomers as "potential giving units." (As in, "we only need 10 more 'potential giving units' to meet our budget this year.") With this perspective, attending worship becomes more like a timeshare presentation for a guest than an encounter with a caring Christian community.

Recently, one of the largest churches in my community (not Presbyterian) publicly repented of its conduct in focussing exclusively on numeric growth. The members ➤







realized that growth, whether numerically or financially is not an appropriate Christian goal. In the Presbyterian Church, our most unfortunate action in this regard was our decision to “double in the 80s.” Not only didn’t it work, it couldn’t work and it shouldn’t have worked. Numeric and financial growth can never be more than the by-product or result of obedience and health.

Congregations are increasingly anxious about their future; this is understandable. It is very difficult to see beyond declining membership and a deficit bank account. Often we deal with this anxiety by getting caught up in the “if only we had the right ... something” conversation. “If only we had the right minister or the right location or the right musician or the right worship style or the right theology then everything would be right.” This is a dangerous road to travel: It seeks simplistic solutions to complex issues. The world is very different than it was even 20 years ago. Demographics have changed, we are all older, society has changed, the baby boom is over and stores are open Sundays—just to name a few things that make understanding the Church much more complex than we often assume. It is unrealistic to believe that changing only one factor (like the minister) will adequately answer a complicated question.

As we further consider this anxiety, however, it is a little harder to comprehend why we squander the opportunities we do have. Treating guests as sources of revenue or fresh blood is inappropriate. Treating guests rudely is even worse. Yet, I have heard too many stories of people who were ignored or even snubbed when first attending a new church. Interestingly this also includes those whom, having been heavily involved in their own church, moved to another community, and were treated so poorly by the churches they visited that they chose to stop worshipping altogether. Occasionally a guest is smothered with attention—like the friend who, on his first visit to another congregation, was asked to serve on the board of managers. This is also inappropriate; however, more often newcomers are ignored all together.

Most ministers are familiar with the truism that “most congregations consider themselves friendly but in reality are friendly only to each other.” I’m realizing even this isn’t true. I recently heard that the longer a person attends a church, the less likely it is someone will call if they suddenly stop. I also know many who have gone through traumatic life changes (divorce, job loss, widowhood) and no other

member of the church acknowledged it.

It is very difficult to overcome a survival mentality. It is also harder to change course the closer we are to the rocks. However, if we are honest about many of our bad habits, at the very least we need to ask ourselves whether worry, anxiety, a preoccupation with numbers or ignoring guests and fellow members are effective outreach strategies.

#### WHAT IS THE PLAN?

If these factors cause the disquiet felt in our congregations, the next question must surely be, what is God’s plan for our congregation?

I am regularly asked to come and lead visioning workshops for congregations. I have managed to avoid almost all these requests, not because I am opposed to doing them but because they almost never seem to work. Sometimes the act of crafting a vision is more important than enacting it. Other times we believe that if we apply a business model, we will get business results.

I was preaching at a small congregation; small enough that they couldn’t afford a minister. After the service, a woman came up to me, shook my hand and said, “We need you to come be our minister, we need you to wake us up.” As I considered her words, I realized that this may be the real

**“We are more concerned with what others can do for us than what we (as Christians) can do for others. The most extreme version of this was the congregation that spoke of newcomers as “potential giving units”**

issue and not a lack of planning or vision.

Throughout the synod, I have had many different experiences of work and worship in many different congregations. I have experienced utterly contemporary worship, completely traditional worship and everything in between. I have listened to beautifully crafted sermons and wonderfully inspirational music. Worship has been theologically correct and presented decently and in good order. Rarely has it been passionate or exciting or challenging. Our worship tends to be heavy on the comfort of God’s word and light on the demands.

I am reminded of the words of the preacher Erwin McManus who maintains that as Christians we shouldn’t have to worry about going out to evangelize, we should simply live Christian lives that are interesting and exciting enough to attract others to the Gospel. He makes the point that most of our lives are too boring to draw others to Christ. (And yes, I include myself in that observation.) Likewise, we must wake people up in worship, wake them (and ourselves) up to a new life in Jesus Christ.

We don’t need new plans. The Bible is very clear about what we need to be about. Our best starting point is simply



to do what the Gospel demands. This is, however, easier said than done, for nothing happens without cost. As we consider this cost, we need to keep in mind the two great myths of the church:

1. That we can have growth without change, and
2. That we can have change without conflict.

Somehow we have come to believe that we can move forward without moving or that we can change without changing. This is not possible. Somehow we have also come to understand that if we just believe the right things or have the right kind of worship or the right kind of programs then our churches will turn around and we will stop our decline. There is no silver bullet. There is no easy answer. That does not mean that God is done with us. It does, however, call for a different understanding of what it means to be the Church.

As we consider what it means to be passionate and awake about our faith, an important observation is found in the cliché, "If you're gonna sell soap, you've got to take a bath." We are not primarily in the business of building the Presbyterian Church; we are sharing what Jesus has done in our own lives. If we have no story to tell, if Jesus has not changed our lives, then it is next to impossible for him to change the lives of others through us. We need to be aware of and open to Christ's work in our hearts and we need to be willing to share this. In other words, as Christians and as the Church, we exist for the sake of the world; the world does not exist for us.

We must also realize that God blesses the prepared. It is only as we are willing to prepare ourselves, in prayer, in knowledge of God's word, in obedience and even in attitude that we will be able to expect that God will entrust us with the mission that needs to be fulfilled. As someone who follows the Prince of Peace, it is difficult for me to use military analogies to describe our relationship to the Kingdom. Still, the truth remains that we are people under orders and we have a mission to undertake. We need to understand that the mission is more important than the soldier and that we are assigned the mission only if we are useful and can make a difference.

We are going to die anyway. The Presbyterian Church in Canada may be here in a hundred years but we will not. Our question then is not "will we die?" it is "how will we die?" And more importantly, "how will we live?"

As a denomination we have found ourselves a survival mentality. At the very least, we need to acknowledge that



surviving is not living and there are worse things than dying. If we are willing to let go of our need to survive, then we might find new life after all. This is certainly what Jesus suggests we do when He says, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?" (Luke 9:23-25)

#### AM I THE ONLY ONE?

The final part of the mantra stated, "I'm the only one that feels that way." Many people feel isolated in their own congregations. As I have already mentioned, some are isolated because of their own unmet needs: the widow that the people stop calling or the members who feel they have to leave the church because of a lost job or a divorce. These are the people we must minister to. Too often we ask people to fix themselves before they can come to church. Jesus taught that the opposite is true in Mark 2:16-18.

Another group of lonely and isolated Christians are ►





**Treating guests as sources of revenue or fresh blood is inappropriate. Treating guests rudely is even worse. Yet, I have heard too many stories of people who were ignored or even snubbed when first attending a new church**

church to be serving the Lord, but they feel like they are the only ones. These people could be our most precious resource and the frustrating part is that we may be preparing them to leave, either to a church where they can make a difference or nowhere at all.

Solutions to isolation are not found in the business of the Church. These issues will not be solved by committees, nor can we organize ourselves out of them. They are found in our willingness to take responsibility for our own faith journey and our own community of faith. They are also found in the congregation's willingness to be open to the realization that we cannot grow and stay the same.

also those who truly desire to make a difference but are overwhelmed by exhaustion, indifference or an inability to move the church forward. I can't list all the concerns I have heard so let me give four.

- The man who has had a profound life-changing experience of Jesus and can find no one to share it with.
- The woman who just wishes there could be a little more variety and joy in the music and worship.
- The minister who feels the pressure of building the congregation without changing anything.
- The family who want to serve Jesus and their church but are not welcome to do anything but menial tasks.

Sadly, it is often the people with the quietest voices or the least power who feel this way the most. As I have travelled and spoken with people throughout the synod, there is a great desire for things to be different and a great uncertainty about how to go about it. These are people who love God, who love the Presbyterian Church and are committed to the Church, but who feel that they cannot make a difference. They want to grow in their faith, they want their

We cannot serve God and not let ourselves be changed. Things will begin to change when we decide that we need to find other Christians who believe as we do and to get together. Things will begin to change when we choose to pray for our ministers and our elders and our denominational leaders and our neighbours who do not yet know Jesus and we actually do it. Things will begin to change when we choose acts of service and obedience which quietly and gently make a difference in the lives of others. Things will begin to change when we stop worrying and thinking about ourselves and start thinking about others. Things will begin to change when we become passionate and excited about the work Christ is doing in our midst and begin to share it. ■

*Rev. John-Peter Smit is the Congregational Development Consultant for the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda. He has served Presbyterian congregations in Canada and the United States. John-Peter is married to Tori, a Diaconal Minister in the Presbyterian Church. They have two children, Jacob and Miriam. He can be reached at [johnpetersmit@yahoo.com](mailto:johnpetersmit@yahoo.com)*





# Regional Staff Provide a Helping Hand

They're waiting for your call. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

Who do congregations call when they have a problem, need assistance, or are seeking information? Regional staff, of course. Highly trained and deeply motivated, the 14 regional staff across the country encounter little they aren't capable of tackling. "I offer support, workshops, resource material and consultations among congregations and presbyteries in matters such as strategic planning, natural church development, elders, congregational and pastoral care,

conflict resolution, evangelism and mission outreach, and session and presbytery retreats," said Wayne Stretch, regional minister with the Synod of B.C. "I also support and encourage new church development and renewing church strategies, and offer pastoral care and support to clergy and other church professionals within the synod."

Though individual portfolios vary, regional staff—who are hired and fully supervised by synods—do all this ➤





**"I think the synods wanted to have more say, and they wanted to experiment with them reaching into different ministry areas"**

plus support work with children and youth, help out with general Christian education (including mission education) and assist with camping ministries.

"I felt called to youth ministry long before I knew such a thing even existed in our denomination," said Audrey Cameron, currently the

camping and youth consultant for the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces. "In the Atlantic Provinces, there were not a lot of multi-staffed churches, let alone ones that employed someone to do only youth. I still cannot get my head around the fact that the synod took a chance with me. I am grateful!"

Cameron was chosen to be the guinea pig in a pilot project agreed upon by General Assembly back in 1986. Her then-titled synod youth director position was the catalyst for creating regional staff positions as they exist today.

But challenges exist. While the Life and Mission Agency and the Women's Mission Society contribute much of the budget, if synods decide they need more staff than what is agreed upon at the national level, the synod is responsible for funding the extra body. (Staff are allocated by the size and number of the churches within the synods, not by the size of the synods themselves). Furthermore, geographically large synods are often strapped because they receive the same travel allocations as a synod with congregations very

close together.

And although regional staff have been around for more than a decade, some congregations still don't know they exist. (All synods have regional staff, though Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario currently sit vacant).

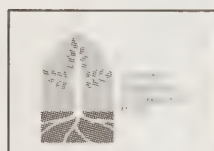
Kathy Ball, educational ministries coordinator with the Synod of B.C., said her portfolio covers congregational education as well as WMS initiatives, PYPS, and anything else that congregations request.

Ball said she hopes congregations know she and other regional staff are available for consultation, and to serve and support their work. "But part of the challenge is that people presume we will be too busy to work with them so they don't ask," said Ball.

Lynda Reid, education consultant for the Synod of Central, North-eastern Ontario & Bermuda for 20 years, agrees. "As the work of synod staff has evolved, I think the majority of congregations are now much more aware of their workers and how they can assist the wider ministry of the church. That said, there are exceptions. In a large synod like CNOB with more than 280 congregations, not all those who need the help of a synod staff person get it because they don't know we exist! That is still a frustration."

Regional staff, in their current form, didn't exist until 1995 when General Assembly decided to support the new model. Prior to this, various national bodies (including the WMS and the Atlantic Mission Society) employed and directed people to handle specific regional tasks. But by shifting responsibility to synods, staff could set their own directions and became tuned into the needs of their congregations.

"I think the synods wanted to have more say, and they wanted to experiment with them reaching into different ministry areas," said Reid. "But it can be difficult because



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each synod works independently and some of the synods have really struggled to keep staff in place. It also took a long time for some synods to decide on their specific needs."

Despite challenges, it's clear that ministers, lay leaders, committee workers, and presbyters can benefit from regional staff. "I've observed congregations consistently struggling with too few workers and too

much to do," Ball said, when asked if she notices any consistent struggles among congregations.

But helping to relieve some of the pressure is exactly what regional staff can do.

"It's great for each synod to decide where they need to focus their staffing resources," said Cameron. "It makes sense since our synods are so different in terms of needs, size and resources." ■

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# Main Street Evang

St. Paul's, Leaskdale, is eager to please the Lord. BY MARION SCHAFFER PHOTOS BY ANNA LISA SANG

About a year ago, a friend of mine took me to see a new Presbyterian church built near her home in Uxbridge. "You've gotta see it!" she said.

As we drove up Main Street through the village of Leaskdale, we passed by the original St. Paul's church where Lucy Maud Montgomery worshipped when her husband was the minister many years ago. And then, there it was, the new St. Paul's, not 500 yards further up the very same street.

It was very impressive.

I thought, it looks like a recreation centre, or a library, or a concert hall—it's gorgeous! And I was right. We walked into the open building and as we looked around it was everything I imagined: a recreation centre with a gym, a library and a sanctuary with a raised stage large enough for a wonderful concert.

No organ. No altar.

State-of-the-art sound system and overhead screen. How did this happen?, I wondered.

My friend and I quickly connected with the associate pastor, Liz Honeyford, and when I asked the "how" question, she had one word for me: prayer. And then she went on to tell me that this church, which had dwindled to 35 members, had mushroomed into well over 500 people!

What are they doing here? I wondered.

Recently, I drove up to Leaskdale and walked through those doors again, on a Sunday morning.

The parking lot was full and people were spilling out of the building after the 9 a.m. service, while others were talking over coffee as they stood around in groups in the spacious foyer. There were people of all ages: families, teenagers and old folk walking in with canes. I could hear jazz (love it!) and when I looked into the sanctuary,





# elism

I saw messages and reminders about church events flashing on the busy overhead screen.

I took my seat with those who had come for the 11 o'clock service and looked through the bulletin.

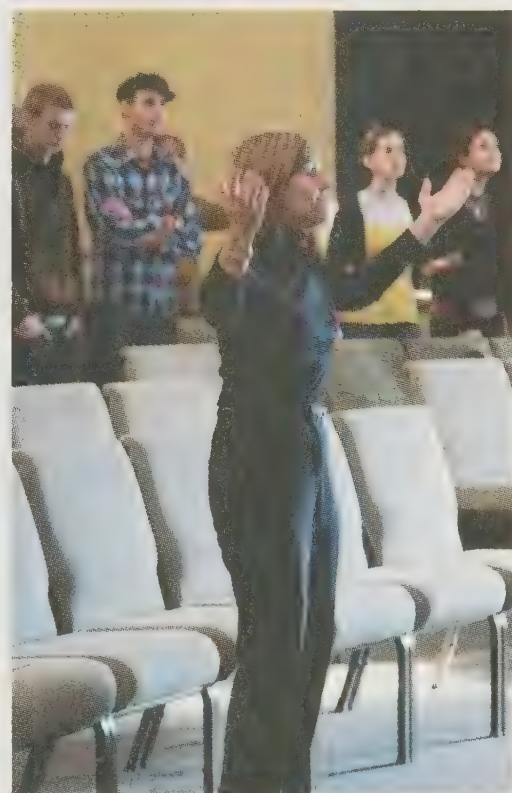
No order of service. No list of hymns. Instead, pages about St. Paul's This Week and Gifts of Change from PWS&D and other church agencies, plus appeals from Africycle, Sketch and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

And then a woman's face appeared on the screen above me and she described, with tears in her

eyes, her experience helping HIV/AIDS victims. And when it was over, worship began.

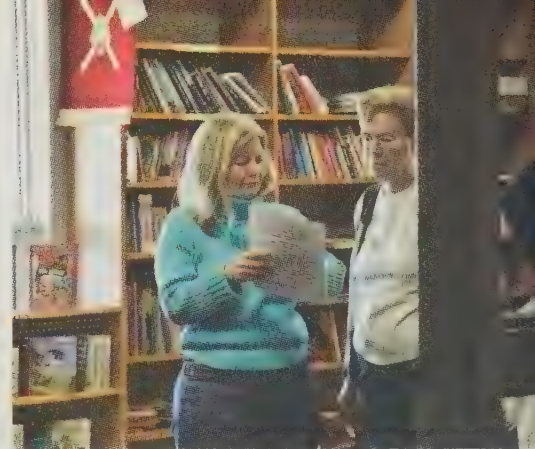
Honeyford began with announcements, a call to worship and a gathering prayer delivered in a gentle, low-key fashion and then, with Pastor Andrew Allison as lead guitar-and-vocals man, we all began to sing. And I mean sing. And I mean joy! Throughout the whole service, which was continuous praise, and prayer, and love (dare I say it), seven musicians worked up there with Allison.

During the service when Allison invited people to come up closer ➤



Presbyterians worshipping at St. Paul's, Leaskdale, Ont.; Rev. Liz Honeyford, above; Rev. Andrew Allison, centre, top.





**“Evangelism is about telling people about Jesus. It’s not about asking people for money, or handing them a tract. We’re about reaching out to people so that they hear what Jesus said”**

to the front, I just had to move from where I had been sitting in the back row, as an observer, to be more a part of all that freedom in worship, and yes, again I say, all that joy.

Yes, there was a prayer of confession.

And yes, the sermon was Bible-based. And made me laugh. And allowed me to hear some of Allison’s faith story. And touched my heart. I saw in his eyes vulnerability expressed with humility, and his compassion for all who were there.

What I experienced included a relevant openhearted message and the sharing of personal journeys of faith from many who were present all wrapped up in an atmosphere of welcoming acceptance.

It did not feel like a show or a rock concert; there was no applause. Most of the time Allison, and the others leading in worship, sang with their eyes averted, or closed, and I knew that they were praying with us, not getting between us and the Lord. I felt a strong connection and empathy with everyone in that holy space and yet, somehow, I felt alone with the Lord and very much at peace.

Near the end of his sermon Allison asked, “Stand if you are grateful to God for doing something unexpected in your life which cannot be called a coincidence.” I stood with many others. And later he said, “If you need healing of any kind come forward at the end of worship.” Several people did.

The service closed with a benediction and then those who felt the need of healing or private prayer stayed to be ministered to by Honeyford, and Allison, as well as Allison’s wife (and mother of their four young boys), Colleen.

Afterwards I sat with Andrew Allison and asked him all my burning questions. “Evangelism,” he told me is “about telling people about Jesus. It’s not about asking people for

money, or handing them a tract. We’re about reaching out to people so that they hear what Jesus said. Repentance is also a necessary part of the package. It’s about real life. We call it ‘lasagna ministry.’ When people have heard Christ’s message and then choose to follow what He taught, what we want them to do next is to get into discipleship of some sort, discipleship that connects with who they are.

“The PCC tradition comes from a history of risk-taking, of unashamed faith with great expectations. We are building on what began long ago.”

Honeyford added, “The Presbyterian Church was evangelical in the ‘50s. Preachers spoke with fire in their bellies and passion in their sermons!”

Honeyford and Allison admit that demographics are in their favour in this suburban community. Younger families have come in large numbers to live in the less costly areas north of the GTA. The location of this new church was carefully planned.

But, Allison insists it was more than just location. “All this began with a core of seniors who prayed and prayed some more, at every opportunity, asking God to show them what had to be done. And yes, some people did leave when we got our answers.” To which Honeyford adds, “And we have prayerfully helped people to find a church that they need if it’s not this one!”

I believe this lasagna ministry is about waiting on the Lord and then being willing to take the risk of going wherever He leads. What a privilege it was to worship with this daring, eager-to-please-the-Lord congregation. ■

*Rev. Marion Schaffer is a regular contributor to the Record.*



# Meet Jesus

It really is all about the truth of Christ.

BY ANDREW ALLISON

**T**he term “church growth” makes me queasy, or at least, uneasy, in the same way that the term tilt-a-whirl makes me queasy at the fall fair or the announcement of turbulence makes me uneasy at 33,000 feet. I think the queasiness generates from the same place—I wonder who or what is driving this thing.

What are the motives behind church growth? Am I pursuing this to lift the name of Jesus higher or am I just trying to make a name for myself? Is this about Jesus or about me?

Don't get me wrong—fundamentally, I believe churches are supposed to grow, and more importantly, God wants churches to grow and flourish. Jesus wouldn't have said things like “take your light out from underneath that basket and let it shine” or “move into all the world and make disciples” if he was content with a church plan of maintenance or gradual decline.

God wants our churches growing and alive.

In God's kindness I've witnessed this first-hand, most recently at St. Paul's church in Leaskdale, Ont. A group of 40 people in worship in 1995 has grown to 10 times that and more here in 2008.

This is part of our story.

First of all we were, and continue to be, committed to introducing people to Jesus. We're moving from talking about Him towards experiencing Him. We have said from the beginning that you can't give away what you don't have, so a top-shelf value at St. Paul's is a deepening relationship with the Risen Jesus. Life begins with surrendering my life to Jesus and then Him infusing His Life into me. Life grows and continues; He lives His life in us.

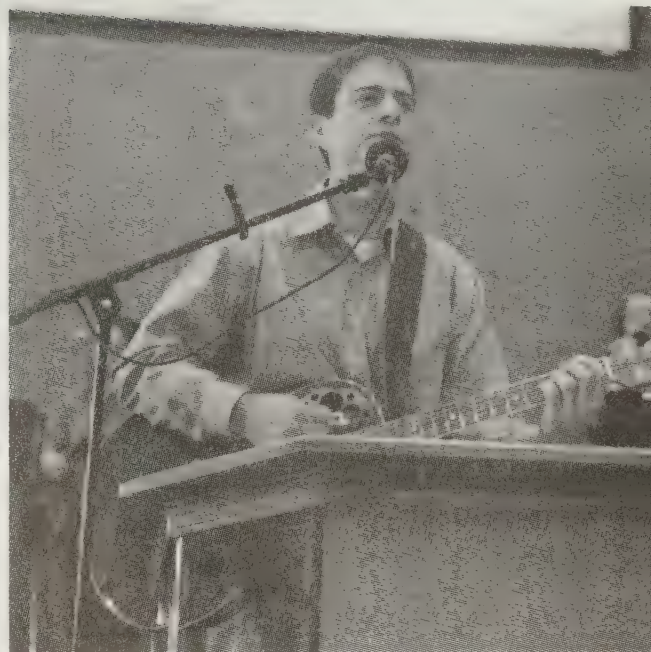
Early on in our shared experience of the life of Christ, we found ourselves

drawn to pray together regularly. In fact, we began to feel like this might be the most important thing we do together. There were four of us that first Tuesday morning at 8:30 sitting nervously on the hard oak pews of the sanctuary. It wasn't fancy, prayers were often awkward and there was lots of silence, but we were compelled by our own desire to love Jesus better and the conviction that our little community needed Him far more than they knew.

Our experience is that God generally doesn't allow praying just to happen for the sake of praying. We found that God answers! We were praying things like: “Let your Kingdom come here on earth as it is in Heaven,” and, “Would You increase our experience of Your love?” and stunningly, God began to answer those prayers.

Only it didn't happen the way I imagined.

I thought church growth would be piles of new people busting through the church doors on Sunday mornings. I fantasized we would be like a Future Shop church where people camp out overnight so they can be first through the doors in the morning to get the latest gizmo. As if! What God did do was begin to address some of the goofy things in us. Truth broke out in places. One of our musicians admitted to a drinking problem. As he got honest and opened up over time, a number of others owned up to addictions. Jesus meets them regularly as they gather weekly. Others of our people who are divorced or are going through divorce have met together, with safe and godly leadership, to talk about the shame and loss they were experiencing. Jesus met



**“We're moving from talking about Him towards experiencing Him”**

them. A group of young moms shared a morning a week together, swapping birth stories and recipes. One, a Christian (my wife) begins to gently invite them to church. A number came; several met Jesus.

To my surprise, our Lord has begun to address some of the goofy things in me, the minister. I had imagined, when I came here, that I was going to help everyone else and set them straight. God urged me to get honest with some trustworthy people both inside and outside of the church. He began to identify things I was carrying that are incongruent with His life in me: insecurities that I had expended great energy trying to conceal, perfectionist tendencies, a suffocating competitiveness, fear, the desire for people to like me ... the list is considerable. Contrary to our protective tendencies (hoping that if we hid our junk long enough, it would go away) we found that it was the truth that set us free. The cross of Jesus Christ began to transform lives as people owned up to what was really going on in their lives.

That's when people outside the church began to get interested in what God was doing in our little church. ■

*Rev. Andrew Allison is minister at St. Paul's, Leaskdale, Ont.*



# PWS Developments

The official newsletter of  
Presbyterian World Service & Development

March 2008 edition

PWS&D is the development, relief and refugee agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

## PWS&D Launches the Loaves & Fishes Fund

*The Gift of One  
Becomes a Gift for Many*



In Jesus' hands, five loaves and two fish became enough to feed a multitude, with plenty of leftovers remaining!

PWS&D has designed the Loaves & Fishes Fund so you can be part of the ongoing miracle of multiplication through your planned gifts.

### How it Works

When you donate to the Loaves & Fishes Fund, one-seventh of your gift is used to support the work of Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) in the year it is given. The rest of your gift is invested by the professional fund managers for the Trustee Board of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Over the next six years, PWS&D uses the annual interest earned from your investment and a portion of your

original gift to support ongoing development and relief work. At the end of seven years, your entire gift, plus all the income and capital gains generated by your investment, is used for the work of PWS&D.

Gifts to the Loaves & Fishes Fund help PWS&D commit to long-term development projects by providing a steady income stream over a seven-year period. Only undesignated gifts may be part of the Fund.

### What Can You Donate?

You can invest in the Loaves & Fishes Fund through a variety of gifting vehicles: a bequest through your will, the residue remaining in a trust, RRSPs and RRIFFs, publicly traded securities, real estate, life insurance, charitable gift annuities, or special gifts of cash. We recommend you

If five loaves and two fish became enough to feed a multitude, just imagine what your gift of stock, land or some other asset could do through God's grace.

seek professional legal and financial advice to determine which method is best for you. The Loaves & Fishes Fund is a planned giving vehicle and does not replace regular donations to PWS&D.

### Gifts of Publicly Traded Securities Offer an Added Benefit

Present tax laws stipulate that if you sell publicly traded securities—stocks, bonds and mutual funds—you are taxed on 50% of the capital gains. However, if you gift the security directly to a charity, you will not pay ➔



photo: Paul Jeffrey, ACT



# Loaves & Fishes Fund

any tax on the capital gains. You will also receive a tax receipt for the full market value of the securities. Further details and transfer forms to facilitate your gift are available from the Planned Giving Office at 1-800-619-7301.

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*Taking the five loaves and the two fish, Jesus looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.*

Matthew 14:19-20

the interest earned will go to support PWS&D programs.

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To learn more, contact PWS&D at 1-800-619-7301 ext. 291 or by email to [pwsd@presbyterian.ca](mailto:pwsd@presbyterian.ca).

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2. You will not have to write a cheque each month
3. PWS&D will receive your donations consistently, which will help us ensure steady contributions to overseas partners.

To enrol, contact Cecilia Gruber at 1-800-619-7301 ext. 291 or email [cgruber@presbyterian.ca](mailto:cgruber@presbyterian.ca).





# Congregations in Action!

## St. Matthew's, Ingleside



St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church in Ingleside, Ontario, presented a cheque to PWS&D to help build fresh water wells in Africa.

## St. John's, Toronto



The children of St. John's Presbyterian Church in downtown Toronto proudly presented PWS&D with a cheque for an amazing \$10,175.07 to help support water projects in Malawi.

## Sand Hill



The WMS Fall Rally for the Presbytery of Kingston took place in October. The women listened to a presentation on PWS&D's work in Guatemala and took up a collection to support long-term development activities in the country.

## Unionville



A grassroots partnership with Unionville Presbyterian Church and the AIDS Committee of York Region (ACYR) brought together health care providers, social workers, police officers, educators, people living with AIDS, volunteers and community partners of different faiths and ethnic backgrounds in July 2007. The gathering was the official launch of *In My Shoes*, a 20-minute documentary focusing on the life and experiences of four residents of York Region, Ontario, living with and affected by HIV and AIDS.

Unionville PC provided the funding and human resources to produce the video. As active supporters of PWS&D's Towards a World Without AIDS initiatives and water projects in Malawi, Unionville's "AIDS education and service ministry" program is continuing to look for ways to build ministry partnerships and outreach programs to respond to urgent needs.

## Gifts of Change



The PCC Gift Catalogue has unique and life-changing gifts available year-round. For example:

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To request a copy of the catalogue, call 1-800-619-7301.

Please tell us about your congregation's fundraising efforts for PWS&D. Call 1-800-619-7301 or email [bsummers@presbyterian.ca](mailto:bsummers@presbyterian.ca).



# Frequently Asked Questions

## Learning More About PWS&D

In the last issue of PWS&D, we have answered a few commonly asked questions about PWS&D. In this issue the answers continue, discussing how PWS&D relates to other sections of the Church and how you can help us raise awareness of PWS&D's efforts to end poverty, prevent injustices and bring a new future of peace.

**Q: What's the difference between PWS&D and *Presbyterians Sharing...*?**

A: *Presbyterians Sharing...* is the name of the fund that supports the programs and ministries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, except for development and relief programs, which are funded through gifts to PWS&D.

It enables Presbyterian churches in Canada to collaborate for mission and ministry in Canada and around the world.

Donations to PWS&D support long-term, sustainable development projects with international partners working in health, education, agriculture and income-generation. PWS&D raises funds directly from individuals and congregations and through matching government grants.

**Q: What's the difference between International Ministries (IM) and PWS&D?**

A: While IM and PWS&D are separate departments, we work together in the overall mission efforts of the PCC. PWS&D supports the work of local partners, both churches and like-minded organizations, in the areas of development and relief. PWS&D does not normally send Canadian personnel paid by PWS&D to work overseas.

IM sends Canadian personnel to work as PCC missionaries in both traditional church-related areas such as evangelism, church development, lay



and clergy training, as well as in the development and relief field. While these Presbyterians are financially supported by IM through *Presbyterians Sharing...* they are sometimes assigned to partners whose programs are supported by PWS&D.

**Q: What can I do in my church to raise awareness of PWS&D?**

A: PWS&D has a variety of resources and educational materials available, including Advent and Lent liturgies, worship resources, children's activities, brochures and program updates. PWS&D staff and committee members frequently travel to churches to speak on the programs.

Individuals who are interested in actively raising awareness of PWS&D can contact the Communications department 1-800-619-7301 to learn how you can help make a positive difference to those in need.



For more information or to make a donation, contact:



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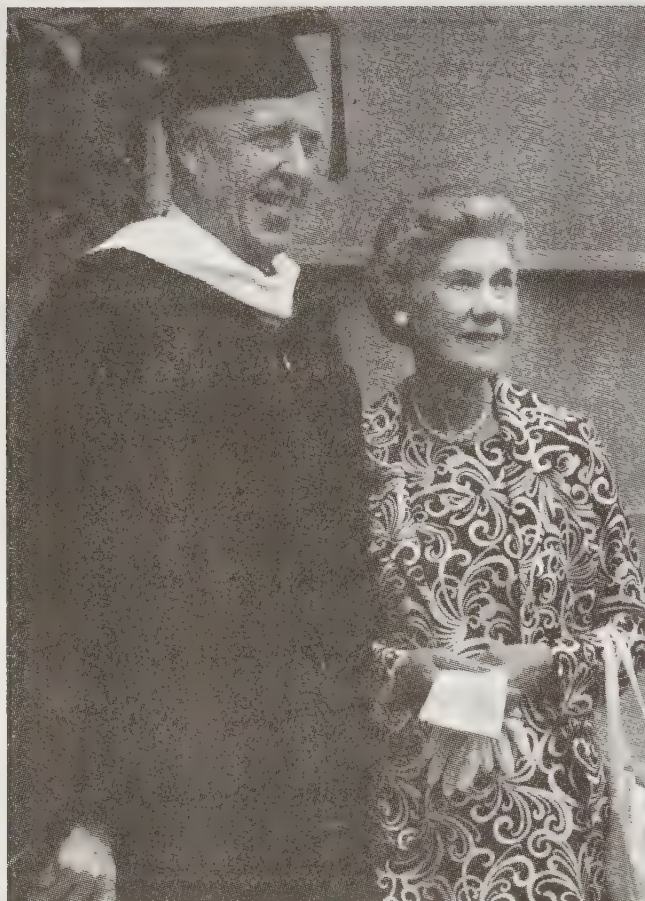
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*PWS&D gratefully acknowledges all individuals and congregations who support the development, relief and refugee work of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.*





# Articulating Faith

Stanford Reid wanted his church to recover its theological clarity. BY ARTHUR VAN SETERS

Back in the early 1970s William Stringfellow, a tenacious lawyer and lay theologian, contended that what the church most needed was the spiritual gift of discernment. That is, one should exercise the gift of spiritual insight that truly engages the particular times in which you are living. Now, in the listing of spiritual gifts by the apostle Paul, discernment is not explicitly mentioned. But Stringfellow, speaking at a Presbyterian College convocation in Montreal, made a compelling case. The social upheaval of the 60s, the long drawn out Cold War and profound questions raised by the Vietnam War were among the growing challenges to face those who would soon enter ordained ministry. For him the witness of Scripture to the Gospel

of Christ compelled discernment of the times as a spiritual discipline.

The church, of course, has faced acute moments of challenge before and done so with prophetic vigor: Augustine in the fourth century, the Reformers of the 16th century, and more recently Barth and Bonhoeffer between the First and Second World Wars. Closer to home, Walter Bryden in those difficult decades for Presbyterians after 1925.

Who might help us discern our way today? Often we are prodded by iconoclasts, people who penetrate the surface of things and send us back to reexamine our core convictions as a community of faith. One such voice is that of Stanford Reid. Through the lens of Donald MacLeod's remarkable biography, *W. Stanford Reid: An Evangelical Calvinist*

*in the Academy*, we meet an articulate, often outspoken, individual who had a running battle to reform the church he persisted in loving but from which he experienced mostly rejection. What can we learn from such a character and why might we be the poorer if such people were not part of our heritage?

For Reid, discerning God's way for his denomination meant taking the confessions of the church, particularly the Westminster Confession of Faith, with great seriousness. He wanted to help the church recover the kind of clarity about what it believed that Calvin articulated. Some thought he reflected an overly rationalistic form of Calvinism than the liveliness of the Reformer's original vision. Perhaps the main difference between Reid and



people like Barth and Bryden was that for the latter the confessions of the church were not the last word. They were subject to the confessions only in so far as they were faithful to Scripture. Reid would argue that the confessions were faithful to Scripture and therefore should be rigorously accepted.

People who are confessionally Reformed and convinced Evangelicals have often been misrepresented in our church. Of course, it is also true that many of them don't even understand themselves! We would add that few people in our denomination, wherever they might be on a conservative-liberal continuum, have evidenced the grand scale of Reid's reach nationally and globally and with such devoted service. Our denomination deserves to be exposed to his thinking.

In the early 1930s, Reid was very concerned about the future of the Canadian Presbyterian Church in which his family had demonstrated profound commitment in Quebec in the wake of the whole church union controversy of 1925. His father had been minister of Stanley Church in Westmount and this congregation was known "as a bastion of a confessional orthodoxy." He was also a friend of J. Gresham Machen, founder of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia—a seminary that sought to maintain the tradition of orthodox Calvinism that had been the hallmark of Princeton Seminary until the late 1920s.

Reid went to Westminster quite deliberately for what MacLeod regards as academic, theological and spiritual reasons. Some regarded this decision not to attend one of his church's colleges as a sign of "disloyalty to the denomination." But three contemporaries of Reid who chose to study at Princeton Seminary were not criticized in this way. Perhaps it is not surprising, therefore, that in the early 1950s he was denied a call to teach church history at Presbyterian College even though he was highly qualified academically.

In 1944 Reid helped establish the Town of Mount Royal Presbyterian Church. He hoped to create what he

called a company of those committed to the cutting edge of the Gospel in an increasingly secular culture. It would be a revolutionary venture in which no fundraising programs would be held and no social club types of activity would be allowed. Long after he left, he noted the numerical decline of the congregation in the 60s and 70s. Part of the reason was certainly the effects of Quebec's so-called Quiet Revolution and the province's increasing secularism. But Reid thought it was also, and perhaps principally, because of its loss of spiritual commitment.

**He wanted to help the church recover the kind of clarity about what it believed that Calvin articulated**

After a short but creative ministry as the first pastor of Mount Royal, he began 39 years of teaching history, first at McGill University and later at the newly formed University of Guelph. All the while he remained intimately involved with the local congregation. He preached regularly, taught a Bible class and was elected an elder. He was active in both the Presbytery of Montreal, and nationally when General Assembly was trying to create new administrative arrangements.

In a forceful statement that captures something of the driving thrust of Reid's thinking and behaviour, he wrote in 1951, "The Protestant Church today throughout the world is troubled with anemia ... There is a new need for that enthusiasm, self-sacrifice and aggressiveness which characterized the sixteenth century Reformation." His view of the church was not a concern about size, rituals and organization but an urgency regarding "a spiritual reawakening based upon a return to the doctrines of the Scriptures."

He was generally critical of the denomination's colleges and served for some 37 years on the Board of Trustees of Westminster Seminary and taught there as a sessional lecturer from time to time. He was even proposed as a candidate for its first president but in 1965 his member-



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ship in a denomination associated officially with the World Council of Churches made him suspect to some. By 1981 Reid had concluded that he was persona non grata at Westminster. He was also increasingly disappointed that Canadian Presbyterian graduates of Westminster often left the denomination and frequently split congregations in the process. In 1977, Reid wrote the president of Westminster Seminary, "I know that over the last ten years ... the graduates from Westminster have generally been a dead loss up here in our church as far as working within the church for reform is concerned ... They have wrecked more than a few congregations."

In his own way Reid sought to be ecumenical but not if this ended up "wiping out our historical Presbyterian position," not if it set aside "what we regarded as the basic Christian position." He was open to cooperate as long as this did not mean compromising one's own basic theological convictions.

It was not until after retirement from the University of Guelph that Reid finally achieved in the early 80s what he must have regarded his highest delight as a teacher and scholar. He was invited to help the Presbyterian Church in Australia deal with pressures there for church union. In the process of supporting the continuing Presbyterians, he was also given the chance to teach church history at Presbyterian Theological Hall, Melbourne. All of this happened at a time of

the declining health of Priscilla, Stanford Reid's beloved wife.

Over the years Reid surprised many both on his theological left and on his right. In the 1960s he supported the new ordination questions. Regarding the ordination of women to ordained ministry, he would not be drawn into the debate. When *Living Faith* was being circulated for comment, he gave his opinion, was listened to and supported the final draft. On these and other major issues before the church he sought to distinguish what was essential doctrinally and what was less essential and could be either tolerated or accommodated. For this he was sometimes roundly dismissed by a number of evangelical voices.

In 1979 Stanford Reid received an honorary D.D. from Presbyterian College. In presenting him, Joseph McLelland depicted Reid as "a worthy debating partner, an outspoken but fair critic, and one of those theologians whose disagreement with majority opinions are always to be taken seriously."

As a historian Reid saw a difference between world history and church history. He held that the latter sought to place the church in the context of the former. Reid emphasized that Christ is the Lord of all history but also "cautioned against ever attributing an event directly to divine intervention."

MacLeod concludes his biography with a thoughtful summation that captures something of the essence of Stanford Reid for our denomination. "He had carved out a lonely niche for himself: a man who never felt truly comfortable in the mainstream, who was often a loner, but at the same time, paradoxically, a propagandist, a popularizer, even, one might say, an entertainer." He was "a defender of the person in the pew who was puzzled by church politics and anxious for direct dealing and common sense solutions."

Time and again throughout his life he was "ignored, minimized, ostracized, even rejected. Remarkably none of these experiences left him bitter or angry. His Reformed faith provided a ready antidote to this buffeting. He was continually going back to the themes of providence and the perseverance of the saints. His Calvinism was of a very practical and personal nature, gainsaying those who decry that theology as merely cerebral and intellectual." His vision in establishing Town of Mount Royal Church was "a laity equipped to articulate a faith that provided an alternative to the easy and comfortable conformities of Christendom immediately after the Second World War."

My own assessment is that evangelical voices, at their most constructive, encourage the church to think through its theological heritage as a whole; they push for deeper reflection on our basic convictions. We need this earnestly as we face new and difficult questions for the times in which we live. Discerning God's way for the church arises in the interrelationship between what it is that we believe and the challenges we are called to engage. ■

*Rev. Art Van Seters is Principal Emeritus of Knox College, Toronto and was moderator of the 125th General Assembly.*

**This is the first of two related articles.**

**Next month Van Seters discusses Douglas Hall.**

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# Radical Disciples

Young Christians, like all Christians, need a theology of passion. BY SHARI GREEN

**R**adical disciples. Counter-cultural prophets. Teenagers.

One of these things is not like the others ... is that song going through your head? Does adolescence fit at all with the concept of revolutionary faith? Are young people today even thinking about faith at all? They aren't exactly coming through our church doors in droves, asking questions and making commitments. Then again, they are seeking: they want to know who they are, what their purpose is in life, who's going to love them, who's going to be there for them, what's worth living for and what's worth dying for.

Kenda Creasy Dean is associate professor of youth, church, and culture at Princeton Theological Seminary and author of *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church*. She sums up adolescent passions as desires for steadfastness ("being there"), ecstasy ("being moved") and intimacy ("being known"). With typical adolescent exuberance, teens seek these things with a passion. But are they seeking them in the church? Not so much.

They might have checked out church. They might even have been raised in the church. But when teens outgrow the simple theology of flannel board Bible stories and basic truths, if

there isn't a passionate theology waiting to challenge them, then they get the sense that they have outgrown church. "If commitment to Jesus Christ is not, ultimately, a life-and-death investment," writes Dean, "then young people will invest their God-given passion elsewhere." And there are plenty of lesser gods waiting to claim the young.

Writer and youth minister Cuyler Black writes that adolescents are like heat-seeking missiles; they can readily sense holy fire—where it is, and where it is not. Therefore, if we hope to ignite the faith of young people today, we must be on fire ourselves. However, it seems that most mainline Protestant churches have toned down passion and smoothed its rough edges so that worshippers' expressions of faith fit nicely into the mould of decorum. In the name of dignity, perhaps, we've tucked passions away and forgotten about them because, you know, we wouldn't want to look foolish in front of God or anything. And so, whether or not we are passionless, we appear that way to the youth who are so desperately seeking something "large enough to fill the existential cavern" that yawns within them.

Being a passionate Christian is, of

**"If commitment to Jesus Christ is not, ultimately, a life-and-death investment, then young people will invest their God-given passion elsewhere"**

course, about much more than Sunday morning worship services, and it goes beyond questions of vocation and purpose, too, although these are part of it. Douglas J. Brouwer, in his book *What Am I Supposed To Do With My Life?* says that vocation "includes all of life—everything we are, everything we do, everything we aspire to be." To find meaning and purpose in life, Brouwer says, we must give ourselves away. This is truly counter-cultural. In a society that values and seeks self-fulfillment, living a life shaped by self-giving love is definitely an against-the-tide choice. ►

Being a passionate Christian is about finding our identity in being loved unconditionally by the God who will always and forever “be there” for us; it’s about living with wonder and thanksgiving, letting go of lesser gods and being free to “be moved” by amazing grace; and it’s about communion, enjoying and extending the friendship of God, and experiencing the intimacy found when we let ourselves “be known” by others. A life poured out in the counter-cultural practice of self-giving love bears witness to this passion.

If young people catch a glimpse of this passion when they look through the windows of our churches and the windows of our lives, they’ll take a second look. When they do, we need to be ready. This means dispensing with superficial theologies and being prepared to offer passionate, life-changing theology in their place. This has huge implications for how we approach youth ministry.

Youth ministry must never be about creating good teenagers and wholesome

youth programs, and it must never be about keeping our young people in the church. Instead, our ministry to youth must be about helping them become radical disciples of Jesus Christ.

How do we do this? Beyond being, by the grace of God, models of radical discipleship ourselves, we can embrace a curriculum of passion, a focus on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that reveals the one Love that is both worth living for and worth dying for, and that takes adolescent desires and transforms them into sacrificial love. In addition, we can encourage and equip teens to adopt Christian practices—spiritual disciplines that create a framework for faith and that realign passions, refocusing them on their proper object, God, thereby loosening adolescents’ grip on lesser loves so they are free to accept and respond to God’s love.

All of this is going to produce some pretty weird kids, because as Dean writes, “immersing young people in practices of self-giving love in a self-fulfilling culture

makes them subversive, dangerous, odd—much like the Christ they follow.” That’s exactly what we hope for them.

Getting back to the question: does adolescence fit with revolutionary faith? Absolutely. Young people are made for this bigger-than-self, against-the-tide life of passion. We all are, but young people are often more ready to commit to a life of radical discipleship than those of us who have been soaking in our culture’s ideologies and expectations for years. We could learn a lot from adolescent passion.

Dean concludes that “in the quest for a passionate church, young people prod us to be more than we have become. They ask only that we be who we say we are: people of Passion, who live for a love that is ‘to die for,’ and who ask them to do the same.” ■

*Shari Green has worked with teens for 10 years through congregational youth ministries. She attends Trinity, Campbell River, B.C.*



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# Threatened with Resurrection

To tell the story of the empty tomb is to say even the greatest earthly power is a failure.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

*Matthew 28:1-8 (9-20)*  
*Easter Day, March 23, 2008*

Easter's coming. Are you scared yet? On Easter Day we'll go out of our way to make our worship joyful. Best music (we'll try, anyway). Best sermon (please, God!). Best attendance (and offering, we hope). Tune the organ. Dust the balcony. Clean the windows. Make the church the best place to be on a long-weekend Sunday morning.

We Presbyterians can do joy. What about fear? Matthew 28:8: "So they left the tomb quickly, with fear and great joy ..." Joy and fear. Jesus is alive! Hallelujah! Jesus is alive! Oh no!

As Matthew tells the story, Mary and Mary get to watch the opening of the tomb. Enough to frighten anyone. But the angel who rolls back the stone says, "Don't be afraid!" They may want to run away. They're supposed to trust enough to stay and listen for the word from God that always follows an angel's call to calm down. The angel knows why they're there and has good news. Come and see. He's not here! Now they're supposed to run! To go and tell the men, then go with them to Galilee. Happy Easter! Get to work! As they turn to go they meet Jesus. He gives them the same orders (verses 9 and 10). They can worship Him for just a moment. Then there's work to do.

Joy and fear. If Jesus is alive, what's next? If this can happen, what else might come? He had power before this, what must He be like now? He asked so much of us before He died, what will He want

us to do now? Caesar couldn't defeat him after all. He'll try harder next time. Next time it'll be you and me on our own crosses! Fear and great joy.

The official version of the story will be that Jesus' friends robbed the tomb (11-15). A capital offence. There's good reason to be afraid!

As Matthew tells the story, there's no doubt they'll learn to live with the fear and joyfully accept the Great Commission (16-20). We're still under that commission. We celebrate his resurrection with great joy. Where's the fear?

Years ago, the Women's Missionary Society chose as an annual theme, *Threatened With Resurrection*, from a book of poems and prayers by Julia Esquivel (*Threatened with Resurrection: Prayers and Poems from an Exiled Guatemalan*, Brethren Press). She is a poet and lay preacher who was exiled from Guatemala in the 1980s. Esquivel confronted daily threats on her life with the power of her faith in the resurrection. She sustained hope by believing the powers of the world face a greater threat than they could ever wield. The powers are threatened with resurrection.

Why not make that our Easter sermon titles and service themes this year? It's dangerous to dare to declare Jesus is alive. To tell the story of the empty tomb is to say even the greatest earthly power is a failure. To declare an end to oppres-



sion. To celebrate the defeat of everything that denies life and everyone who deals death in this world. To declare our course against the current.

Esquivel says resurrection is "something that doesn't let us sleep, that doesn't let us rest, that won't stop pounding deep inside ... it is the earthquake soon to come that will shake the world and put everything into place." She invites us to join in "this vigil and ... know what it is to dream! Then you will know how marvellous it is to be threatened with resurrection." ■

*Rev. Laurence DeWolfe is minister at St. David's, Halifax.*





Cast and crew of *Promised Land*, a Christmas pageant written and composed by David Buckley (far right, behind his wife Anca), at Knox, Dundas, Ont.

# Hosanna in the Highest!

A Song of Love.

## Grace Will Lead Us Home

(Matthew 20: 19-34; 21:1-11)

by David Buckley

1) There is a song of love, long ago  
That's meant to set us free  
It was in the time of this story, we know  
That we saw how love is meant to be

2) Amazing grace, how wonderful the thought  
That's there for you and me  
We shall overcome for God's will shall be done  
And the blind will all begin to see

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the Highest!  
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the Highest!

3) Through many dangers, toils and snares  
Our Lord has already gone  
The grace that dwells in His strength is ours  
And that power will make us belong

4) The Lord has promised goodness to stay  
From where we'll never roam

What now is lost will be found on the way  
And grace will lead us home

Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the Highest!  
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the Highest!  
Hosanna in the Highest!

5) Amazing grace, how wonderful the thought  
That's there for you and me  
We shall overcome for God's will shall be done  
And the blind will all begin to see

Sing Hosanna, sing Hosanna, sing Hosanna!  
Sing Hosanna, sing Hosanna, sing Hosanna!  
Sing Hosanna, sing Hosanna, sing Hosanna!

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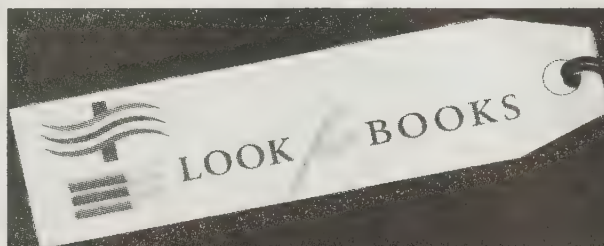
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# The Battle of the Bald

While outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we grow. BY PHIL CALLAWAY



**T**hough I am only 46, my hair has begun to vanish. I do not have trouble growing hair. But location is everything with hair. I am like a struggling oil company. I have great production, but poor distribution.

If you're one of those guys who still has his original hair, go ahead and laugh. But if you're experiencing a recession yourself, if you've been cluttering pillows and clogging drains, if you've stopped combing and started rearranging, you'll be happy to know that there is hope. I can't think of anything hopeful at the moment, but give me some time and I'll think of something. While I do, let's look at some ways in which the scientific community, working hand-in-hand with laboratory rats, has shown us just how bleak the picture really is.

**1. Genes.** Scientists recently announced that they have discovered the gene that causes baldness. Unfortunately, they haven't a clue what to do with it.

**2. Drugs.** If you were alive during the 60s, you know that drugs taken in large quantities helped men forget many things, including their baldness. But this was momentary and, let's face it, the side-effects were monstrous. Researchers now claim, however, that they have found a proven hair-growing drug. It's called Minoxidol and it has been known to work on various objects. Fruit.

Wood. Snooker balls. Unfortunately, it has been largely ineffective in men.

**3. Music.** After years of research and very little success, the Daiichi Pharmaceutical Company, a leading Japanese drug maker, decided to make wads and wads of money by releasing a compact disc of Mozart music. Yes, believe it or not, the CDs are now marketed exclusively through pharmacies. Daiichi Pharmaceutical claims that the music will soothe the listener, relieve stress and even reverse the balding process. I'm not sure about this, but they may be on to something here. You see, during high school I conducted similar experiments on my father in which I played loud music for him. This caused his head to appear hairier.

## Practical tips to try at home:

**Relocate.** Yes, you may want to move to another province where no one will recognize you; where no one will know that you once had hair. Wait a minute, that's not what I mean. What I mean is relocate your hair. Move it from an area where it thrives to The Dead Zone.

**Innovate.** The most popular technique is to grow your hair very long on one side and comb it carefully over the deceased area. If you have false teeth to go along with it, you can scare the

living daylights out of your grandchildren during a windstorm. Or wear a hat everywhere. If this fails, grow your eyebrows to their full length and comb them back. Let me know how this goes.

If all these things should fail, perhaps you can try a concept as old as the Bible: contentment. I was standing in the parking lot the other day. My hair was blowing in the breeze, and I didn't have the energy to chase after it. Suddenly, a comforting thought hit me: Our heads were made for more than growing hair.

When it comes right down to it, we determine very little of what goes on above the hairline. But we can do something about what goes on beneath it. Second Corinthians 4:16 says it best: "... Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."

I need to be reminded of these things often. Yesterday I looked in the mirror and told my wife, "Honey, I don't look 46." She said, "No, but you used to." ■

*Phil Callaway is editor of Servant magazine, a popular speaker, and author of Family Squeeze: Hope and Hilarity for a Sandwiched Generation. Visit him at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com)*





# The Vanquished is the Victor

He is risen; He is not here.

BY DAVID WEBBER

March comes in as winter and then it goes to the birds, at least in our neck of the woods. Ever since my pubescent period, I have revelled in March and what comes quickly on its heels. Then, as now, I lived on the swampy end of a lake, which is to say, the productive end when it comes to birds and wildlife. A lot of the birds that strongly influenced my youth were shore birds. None were more influential than the killdeer.

When the killdeer returned from wherever they spent their winters, drama season was officially upon us. At first they just ran along the shoreline, picking up worms and uttering thin piping cries. Soon they began to mate and that's when the drama really began. When I was a kid, you couldn't go anyplace around the shore of the Wasa

Slough without a sandpiper kill-dee-ing at the top of its lungs and looking like it was weak and wounded near to death. One or both wings would be hanging like they had been shot off. And oh, the limp! The limp was so pathetic it almost brought tears to your eyes. If you didn't follow the bird to try and catch it, it would literally fly into your path and throw itself at your feet trying to get you to give chase. I usually did. Then the horribly wounded bird would lead me off on a tangent, looking for all it was worth like death was imminent. When I was led suitably far away from the eggs or the young, the bird would suddenly lose every vestige of being wounded and fly off with a victorious cry. I would look then, as I still do today, and marvel at how the vanquished is the victor in this drama. It was never in doubt, and it was

wonderful. It is kind of like Easter.

The writing down of the Easter story in all four Gospels has a context. In all four Gospels, to one degree or other, that context is the persecuted Christian community. Mark's Gospel, very likely written down for the Christian community in Rome close to the time of Nero's persecutions (sometime after 64 AD) would have been blown away by the Easter story.

In the Passion (Mk 15:6ff), Jesus is forced to be an actor by the whole cohort of Roman soldiers (that's about 600 soldiers or 1/10th of a legion, for us military buffs). They forced him to act like the Emperor of Rome. They forced him to wear purple like the Emperor of Rome, they forced him to wear foliage as a crown like the Emperor of Rome, they hailed him like the Emperor of



Rome, they knelt before him like he was the Emperor of Rome. This forced act was to mock Jesus, to make Jesus, whom the Roman procurator Pilate has called King of the Jews, appear vanquished.

The forced act of weakness goes on with more mocking by everyone at the cross, from the casual passerby, to the chief priests and the scribes, to the voyeurs who try and keep Jesus alive to see if Elijah will actually show up. Even the two men who are crucified on either side of Jesus mock him. Everyone mocks Jesus as weak and vanquished. But when he dies, when he gives up his own life and breathes his last, something else seems to be going on.

Paradoxically, the first to catch wind of something else going on is the company commander of the Roman soldiers, who is doing his duty, standing before Jesus to watch him die, and when he does die, marvels: "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mk.15:39). But the something else going on isn't fully realized until three days later. Three days later the word is out: "He is risen; He is not here." (Mk. 16:6)

"He is risen; he is not here." Mark's persecuted Christian community must have marvelled at how the vanquished is the victor in the drama they had just participated in by hearing the Gospel. It was never in doubt, and it was wonderful. It is not just a resurrection; it is the flat-footed defeat of Rome. Some of Mark's community were being martyred for following Jesus. All of them were, to some degree or other, being mocked for following Jesus. That's how religious persecution works. What really ends up being feared is the mocking. But Easter is all about the mocked one winning; the vanquished is the victor. In the drama of the Gospel, or in the dramatic living out of their faith in first-century Rome, the vanquished is the victor. From first century Rome I can almost hear "Hallelujah!"

Oddly enough, it is being mocked for my faith that is a big issue for me in my time and place. I like to think I am in no danger of religious persecution physically, and thankfully in Canada, I probably am not. But the reality is, if

I am to speak outwardly about Jesus in most secular corners of my society, I will quite possibly be mocked. And the fear of that causes me to go about incognito in my faith, feeling publicly vanquished, feeling a huge disconnect between my Christian faith and the society where I am trying to live it out. And in that sense, I am strangely like the people that Mark's Gospel was written for.

But wait a minute. Like Mark's community, I am invited to participate in the Gospel too. Mark didn't write the Gospel just for his community to read, but to fully participate in. I am positive that's the reason he emphasized the Roman emperor so clearly in the Passion narrative. The vanquished is the victor. It is Christ's story; it is Mark's community's story; and it is my story. And in the face of that, and in the face of my own fear of being mocked for my faith, I now personally can appropriate those most precious Easter words, "Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him" (Mark 16:6).

Epilogue: In 1951, Peter Ustinov played Emperor Nero in *Quo Vadis*, about Nero's madness and his persecution of Christians in Rome. As it progresses, Nero burns Rome and blames it on the Christians, who make up the lowest and most vulnerable section of Roman society. As a result, Nero begins to slaughter Christians to justify himself and to satisfy his psychotic madness. One online reviewer (amazon.com) writes: "But the slaughter of the Christians brings no satisfaction to the Emperor. The Christians sing as they go to their slaughter, inspiring the reluctantly impressed Marcus to snap, 'These people know how to die, Nero. You will squeal like a hog.' Nero cannot understand how the Christians can sing as they are being killed. After the slaughter, he goes at night into the arena and is appalled to find that they are all smiling in death." ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry. His books include Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.*



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I give thanks to יהוה for this day!

יהוה is good and יהוה love is always with me!

Go and tell every person: יהוה love is always with them, forever and ever!

יהוה gives strength to me and to my song. יהוה is the source of my salvation.

I am not afraid because יהוה hears my prayer and the strong hand of יהוה saves.

I live to tell everyone what יהוה did, for יהוה was with me in the time of testing.

Open wide the city gates and I will walk right through and thank יהוה.

Today I see יהוה do great things!

Because of the actions of יהוה I am set free and forever blessed.

יהוה blesses the one who enters in the name of יהוה.

יהוה is shining a great light into the world.

Let's have a party. Or maybe we could have a parade for יהוה.

My יהוה is with me and I will live every day with thanksgiving.

I give thanks to יהוה for this day!

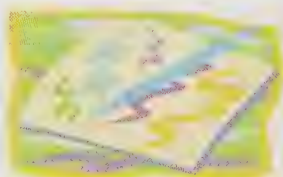
יהוה is good and יהוה love is always with me! (based on PSALM 118)

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*Wonders of Easter*



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## Obituaries

**BRAGG**, Anna Grace (Mackay), died peacefully in Penticton, B.C. November 20, 2007 predeceased by her husband Rev. Dr. Edward Bragg. Grace was born in Saskatoon, Sask.; taught school there and in Vancouver, B.C. In 1948 joined the WMS staff and was appointed first regional secretary in B.C. Grace was a gracious hostess and support to Edward in the congregations where they served: St. Andrew's, Quebec City, Que., St. Stephen's, Creston, B.C. and St. Andrew's Penticton, B.C. and served on the Board of Presbyterian College Montreal, Que.



Grace will be remembered for her faithful Christian witness.

**GRIBBEN**, Donald Albert, a local businessman who was very active in the life of Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church including service as an elder for 35 years and as the Representative Elder for Knox and Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Churches for the Presbytery of Paris passed away on November 13, 2007.

**MCAVOY**, Gloria, elder, long-time member and dear friend of St. Columba Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, Ont.

**MCLEOD**, Rev. Wilfred A., 1917-2007. Wilfred Allan McLeod was born in Alberta to Scottish parents. He had one younger brother Earl Alexander. Wilfred spoke the Gaelic language, something he learned from his grandmother. When Wilfred and his family moved from the harsh realities of the climate in the West, they settled in Waterloo County. Only a short time after their move, Wilfred's father died of Pneumonia, leaving his young wife to raise two young boys.

From the time he was eight to 18, Wilfred attended the Mennonite Church. The spiritual formation and perspective he received during his formative years stood him in good stead throughout his ministry. During his time at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church he met and later married Ruby Cressman. His uncle who was a Presbyterian minister lured Wilfred back into the Presbyterian Church. At Wilfred's request, the Mission Board provided him with ministry opportunities throughout Ontario and Western Canada. He graduated from Knox College in 1950 and was ordained into the Ministry of Word and Sacraments in the same year after receiving a call from St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Wiarton, Ont. During his sojourn in Wiarton, Wilfred and Ruby became parents to David and Stuart. From Wiarton, Wilfred became the minister at St. Andrew's, Welland, Ont. In 1967 Wilfred became the Minister of St. John Church in Hamilton, Ont. While there his wife and son Stuart were killed in a carbon monoxide accident. As a result of this accident, Wilfred left the ministry for a time and worked for the Social Welfare

Services of Hamilton-Wentworth.

He met Margaret Harper while supply preaching in Hagersville, Ont., and they were married. After a brief ministry in Wiarton, Wilfred returned to Waterloo to do further study at Wilfred Laurier University and then became associate minister at McNab Street Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ont. He retired from MacNab in 1989. Interim ministries followed: Brantford, Ancaster and Cambridge, Ont. Wilfred was given the honour of Minister Emeritus of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Hespeler.

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Wilfred was a gentle, compassionate and caring person. He will be remembered for his vitality, amazing memory and his concerns for the poor, the hungry and the oppressed not only in Canada but abroad. During his ministry he never failed to proclaim his love and devotion to his Lord and Saviour. Wilfred was an inspiration to all who knew him. Wilfred died on Saturday, December 22, 2007 in his ninetieth year. He is survived by his wife Margaret, his son David and several nieces and nephews. ■

# Core Beliefs

Myths underline the moral and supernatural laws.

BY REV. DR. J. H. HANS KOUWENBERG



I write to you in the dead of winter. Even in Abbotsford, B.C., as in the rest of Canada, the leaves have fallen from the trees, some snow has fallen on the ground, the temperature dips a little below freezing and the wind is often cold. Getting up while it is still dark to face the short, often dreary, days of winter is a bit tougher for most of us.

As there's been some recent discussion about the substance and language we use about the core beliefs of our holy Christian faith in these pages, I thought I'd offer a few thoughts of my own. On the one hand, I want to be precise and certain about the basic historicity and truth of the Lord, Jesus Christ, in whom I put my trust. On the other hand, I want to admit that the language of myth and metaphor is also a part of my faith.

Just because something happened in history and is, therefore, profoundly true, does not mean it cannot be spoken of with awe and ambiguity, mystery and metaphor. This is, in fact, the way of much of the language and the literary forms of the Bible.

C.S. Lewis, himself a master of myth and metaphor, acknowledged that the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ really happened; nevertheless, the best of his writing, like his famous *Chronicles of Narnia*,

speaks in the hushed and jubilant, yet more nuanced tones of metaphor. Once upon a time, in the world of Narnia, Aslan, a magnificent and majestic representative of the king of the animal world, lived and loved children of all ages, yet he ended up dying a miserable death upon a stone table to save a rather nasty boy. But he was not gone forever. Rediscovered by the children of Narnia, he came back to life even more powerful and near than ever before.

Wayne Martindale of Wheaton College, Illinois, where many of Lewis's papers can be found, wrote this about Lewis's love for and growing understanding of myth:

*Popularly, "myth" refers to ... ancient fictional stories with supernatural characters and fantastic events. These stories often embody the values of a culture and were at times accorded religious status. Such myths were Lewis's delight from his earliest days, especially Norse mythology. In [his spiritual autobiography] Lewis recounted how myth ... awakened in him a longing for other worlds and was one of the conduits for [what he called] "joy." At first his lumping of Christianity with the pagan myths kept him from finding the source of [his ultimate] longing (God and heaven) until his early thirties.*

*Recounting his conversion to life-long friend, Arthur Greeves, Lewis explained he'd always found the notion of a god dying for his subjects and coming back to life very moving when he encountered it in the pagan myths ... [They] moved him because they suggested a reality which he at some level must have thought or felt to be true, but to which he had*

*given no assent. Lewis explained a large part of his conversion was his learning from his friends J.R.R. Tolkien and Hugo Dyson that Christianity was like the myths he loved, except here it is a "true myth." The pagan myths were human myths; the Gospels are God's myth: the stories happen in actual human history.*

*Some may be disturbed at Lewis's use of myth as a term applied to Christianity. Make no mistake: from 1931 to his death, Lewis was firmly committed to the historicity of Jesus and [the core beliefs of] the Bible. He put the whole weight of his belief and hope in it. [But] the great advantage is [that this allowed] him to make two important points about truth and how we apprehend it. First, it undergirds the concept that the ... moral law and supernatural order [are] always present in human thinking [and writing]. Second, in myth we experience imaginatively, in the concreteness of the story, something which would be abstract if translated out.—The C. S. Lewis Readers' Encyclopedia, ed. Jeffrey D. Schulz et al*

It is spring. A long, dark winter gives way to the light and the warmth of a brilliant sun climbing in a bright, blue sky. The earth is alive and ablaze with green and the multitude of other spring colours.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! ■

Hans Kouwenberg



Stitched Glass, a three-part knitted stained glass 'window,' was created by Kirk Dunn. Pictured is the 5.5 ft by 8.5 ft completed Christian window. (The Judaic and Muslim windows are still to come.) The window tells the story of what Dunn says is the "schism between what Jesus Christ said and did and what the organized church throughout history has done."





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# PRESBYTERIAN Record

April 2008

A close-up photograph of a pair of hands, likely belonging to a person of African descent, gently cupping a small green seedling. The seedling has several vibrant green leaves and a thin stem. It is growing out of a dark, rich soil that is held in the palms of the hands. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The lighting is warm and natural, highlighting the texture of the skin and the freshness of the plant.

## the Sacredness of Soil



A living wall  
which recycles the  
air in the lobby  
of St. Gabriel's  
Passionate  
Parish,  
Toronto



The Lord God took the man and put him in  
the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.  
Genesis 2:15



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## Walking Gently

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On the Cover: Istockphoto



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# GOD'S CREATION

Everything comes from  
and is returned to the  
Lord. BY DAVID HARRIS

Forty years ago I remember doing elementary school projects on pollution, cutting out pictures from *Time* and the other news magazines that came into our house.

So, why are we still facing this issue of global warming? We can't claim we didn't understand what we were doing to the environment.

And where was the church? Indeed, where is the church?

Of all the issues that gripped Christianity in my youth, I don't recall environmentalism being high among them.

It's hardly surprising then that secular society has its own sharp critique of Christianity, pointing out that at the very beginning of our scriptures, God gives humankind "dominion" over the rest of Creation.

This, they argue, is what led Western Christian society to think it could use Creation for its own ends, ultimately unbridled capitalism. While much of this is cheap rhetoric, they have a point. The philosophical underpinnings of Western society are certainly Christian.

We have been sinfully selective in applying our ethics to our conduct in the world, being complicit in pillaging the earth to gain our riches.

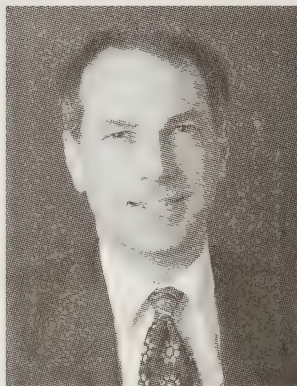
Add to that baggage our own culpability. For example, our buildings have a heavy ecological footprint. Newer structures may be designed for multiple uses, but many older churches are a disaster because they have only one use (worship), and that by too few people in too large a building with too high ceilings where all the heat goes.

Greening our faith is going to take considerable time and effort.

In the meantime, in place of Christianity, secularists gave us the Earth goddess, Gaia. Developed in the 1960s, the Gaia hypothesis came to prominence through the 70s. But for all its romantic allure, this theory has one overwhelming flaw: Gaia has a finite existence. In the end, everything will just dissolve into bits of dark matter floating in space.

Christians, on the other hand, have such a hopeful alternative, yet one they rarely employ.

Most of what passes for Christianity's theological



approach to the environment amounts to referencing a few biblical passages about God being the creator of everything, whether it be the creation of the world in Genesis or various references in the psalms, such as Psalm 24: "The earth is the Lord's and all that therein is," as one of the older poetic translations puts it.

The weakness of relying solely on these passages is that they leave us open to the charge (perhaps even the temptation!) of viewing the world paternalistically. Father knows best and we know what Father knows; we'll take care of it.

It also fails to integrate Creation into redemption and so into heaven, creating an unintended dualism between the stuff of this world—matter—and the stuff of the next—spiritual existence. Such a dualism has always formally been rejected by Christians and its articulation regarded as heresy. But it is nevertheless a commonly encountered belief.

The alternative is to see the Incarnation, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus as more than just a template for faithful believers. As Jesus says in the all-too-often forgotten verse John 3:17: "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him."

Christianity takes the body so seriously, that it teaches God became united to humanity in a body and took a refined ("imperishable," as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 15) form of that body into the eternal divine life. It sees the body as integral to the human person who ultimately gets to enjoy God "face to face" without being annihilated by the overwhelming divinity.

The ancient Greek philosophers and the Hebrew people knew everything came from God and that it was therefore good. The problem was how it could return back to God as they knew it somehow must.

The unique Christian message is that it returns through the life and work of Jesus. As His "body on earth" our calling is, in some sense, to work at returning God's creation back to God.

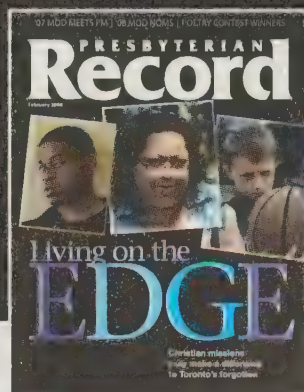
That is a most holy calling in relation to a most holy creation. ■

David Harris



# Letters

letters@presbyterianrecord.ca



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## Don't pass judgement

*Re Living with Gardasil, February*

I am a Family Health Team Nurse and also trained in Parish Nursing. I am very passionate about health promotion and disease prevention. I am familiar with Gardasil, I discuss Gardasil with patients, and as a health care professional I do not pass judgement or opinion on patients one way or another. I recommend patients educate themselves and make their own decisions.

The article reads, "With measles, chicken pox, polio or the mumps, transmission is through everyday human intercourse." I believe the writer meant everyday human interaction.

Gardasil is offered, not mandatory. Gardasil does not allow for unprotected sexual contact. In fact it gives health care providers opportunity to inform patients about the risks of sexual contact and allows for more conversation about intimacy consideration towards others.

I won't debate the relationship to scripture. I won't pretend to be theologically well versed. I am however thankful that humankind has evolved from some early scripture traditions.

I wouldn't want to lead anyone's daughter or son away from a rich vision of the good that is handed down to us in scripture and tradition. I believe it remains our role as parents to share what is good and right for our children, youth and adults with respect to sexual intimacy, Christians and all.

CATHERINE HANSEN, VIA EMAIL

Gardasil article author Rev. Roland De Vries seems to have confused a public

health program—namely the prevention of human papilloma virus infection by a vaccine—with a license to engage in "unprotected sexual contact."

Human papilloma virus is a cause of cervical cancer. Yes, one can have a greater chance of acquiring the virus if one has unprotected intercourse with multiple sexual partners, but women can be exposed to it after marriage—by just one partner. Furthermore, the vaccine does not protect against a host of other sexually transmitted diseases—some of which can cause permanent sterility and others of which could cause death. It is therefore, patently absurd and false to suggest that this vaccination program "... is intended to allow a very specific form of behaviour while mitigating the harm that might otherwise result from it." No public health worker, for even a moment, is going to be recommending unprotected sexual contact on the basis of a person having received Gardasil. Such a recommendation would be contrary to all public health thinking on this subject.

To deny young women the protection of a simple vaccine that can prevent a deadly form of cancer because of how this might lead them to behave smacks of the worst kind of paternalism that I had hoped had vanished long ago—especially among our clergy.

PAUL E. COOPER, MD, LONDON, ONT

## Spiritual Gifts

*Re On His Own Needs, January*

I have been praying the Prayer of Jabez for seven-plus years. As a single working woman living a modest life, I'm far from rich—I don't have a car or home of my own. Why doesn't God

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## Pontius' Puddle



grant my request? Well actually, He has, He does and always will.

Here's what I pray: O Lord God that you would bless me indeed (however you choose to do it) and enlarge my territory (help me to be more and do more for you); that your hand would be with me (thank you that you help me to do whatever you call me to do), and that you would keep me from evil (so that I may not cause any harm or pain, to you, to others, or to myself).

Here's how God has answered: I tithe and give generously, I support a child through World Vision, I volunteer at a centre for the poor and disenfranchised in downtown Toronto, I am involved in many church programs, I am an intercessor for family, friends, fellow believers and unsaved souls. I gave my life to Christ in February 2000, and I have come a long way—I look forward to the rest of the journey.

Anyone who prays the Jabez' prayer expecting to get rich may be disappointed; or he/she may get those riches and find life unsatisfying and wonder why. Blessings are not only material goods; they are spiritual gifts, ministry opportunities, kindnesses. I have been praying Jabez' prayer for my church as well, and exciting things are happening—slowly but surely—and I believe this is in part to my Jabez prayer as well as intercessory prayers. This prayer is like any other—we say it and ask God to hear and answer, but we leave the specifics to Him by faith.

VERA PETKOVSKY, TORONTO

### Eye Contact and Pleasantries

*Re Living on the Edge, February*

Let me share one in a recent series of mission moments at Fallingbrook Presbyterian. The mission committee used four "mission moments" to present the issue of homelessness to our congregation. In the final one of these talks Jan, who is relatively new to our congregation, inspired us with her witness to people "Living on the Edge." What does it mean to do justice and walk humbly with our God? I think that on her walks along Queen Street in the Beaches area of Toronto, Jan brings that verse to life. On these walks, she encounters the homeless and poor of our city. Eye contact and a brief exchange of pleasantries are important for building relationships with each of the people she meets. Sometimes Jan gives them change or a hug or stops for a longer conversation as she goes on her way. Because Jan knows of the work of Evangel Hall, Jan and Louise (another member of the committee) had cards made up to give out to those who they feel might benefit from a little more support than they can offer. These cards, which resemble business cards, list the services provided by the Hall on one side and give a set of directions and a map on the other side. In a large city like Toronto it is easy to ignore those who are "Living on the Edge." Jan has chosen not to.

LIZ STARK, SCARBOROUGH, ONT.

Living just outside of Victoria, we see many of the issues of other urban centres. With the milder climate, Victoria seems to attract a lot of transient travelers from other provinces.

While I agree with the editorial—The Cracks of Society—my comment is directed under the What are We to Do? portion. The second recommendation suggests giving the homeless your spare loonies and toonies is not something that I agree with. Too often these loonies and toonies go to supporting the addiction of the homeless person. I much prefer to buy that person a coffee or hot chocolate. Or, if time allows, spend some time with them in a coffee shop buying them a simple meal and allowing them time to warm up, getting to know them and their story. Also spending time in the local soup kitchens—that our high school supports with student volunteers—is also a great way of getting an understanding of the homeless.

TERESA MCFADYEN, BRENTWOOD BAY, B.C.

### Differing voices

One thing I value about the *Record* is that it allows everyone to have a voice on any issue. Rev. Livingston's letter in the February issue reminds me that it's been a while since the word 'homosexual' has appeared in our magazine. It seems that Livingston would be happy to consider the status of homosexuals in our church settled. I hope and pray that it is not settled, and that articles like the book review by Will Ingram in the



October 2007 issue continue to result in discussion and examination of this issue. Livingston complains that the author of *Jesus*, the Bible and Homosexuality exhibits a "liberal theological agenda" and a "leftward pilgrimage." I rejoice in every article that evidences this pilgrimage on any subject—witness the refreshing Progressive Lectionary in January.

*Living Faith* enjoins us to fight discrimination based on race, sex, age etc. Perhaps one day the words 'sexual orientation' will be included, and I will no longer have to defend my membership in a church whose stand on this issue I find disturbing and unjust.

LESLIE SHAW, THUNDER BAY, ONT.

A thank you is due Rev. Dr. J. Kevin Livingstone for his letter in the *Record* regarding the review of Jack Roger's book. We don't need books of this nature muddying the waters. Instead I give you *The Case For the Real Jesus* by Lee Strobel.

The book addresses six challenges to Christianity:

1. Scholars are uncovering a radically different Jesus in ancient documents just as credible as the four gospels
- 2 The Bible's portrait of Jesus can't be trusted because the church tampered with the text
3. New explanations have rejected Jesus' resurrection
4. Christianity's belief about Jesus were copied from pagan religion

5. Jesus was an imposter who failed to fulfill the messianic prophecies

6. People should be free to pick and choose what to believe about Jesus

All the above are answered by professors in the fields of ancient religions, mythology, ancient history and the dating of ancient manuscripts.

Of great interest is the author's statement that, "It was my agnostic wife's conversion to Christianity and the ensuing positive changes in her character that prompted me to search for the real Jesus."

Witnessing is so very important.

G. MACKINTOSH, PORT COQUITLAM, B.C.

### Very Informative

*Re Afghanistan's Dusty Hope, October*

Your article is very informative. Much as we decry war, the Taliban must be defeated. Women in particular suffered when the Taliban ran the country. People demonstrating for withdrawal of troops need to be informed.

The situation in Sudan is also terrible.

G. MACKINTOSH, PORT COQUITLAM, B.C.

### More Virgin Birth...

In December there was mention again of the virgin birth. What is the problem? Has no one heard of invitro fertilization? Surely God, the creator of the universe, would have no trouble doing what was required.

ANONYMOUS,

SOMEPLACE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

### A Future Feature

We were happy to see Amy MacLachlan's article *Living On The Edge* in February. It is a good thing to celebrate the missions and people who serve those who are so frequently forgotten in our society.

While we recognize that it is not possible to feature all of the agencies that offer assistance, we lament the omission of Portland Place, a Presbyterian mission in downtown Toronto.

Since 1991 Portland Place Non Profit Housing has provided 46 units of secure, rent geared to income housing for men, women and families who face a range of ongoing challenges that make finding and keeping appropriate housing extremely difficult. The tenants are welcomed into a community that offers in-house supports to enable them to stabilize their lives. They learn that they are honoured and valued. When they are assured that they are cared about, they, in turn, have an increased capacity to care about each other. More than just housing, they find a long-term home. They get to know and enjoy each other at community meals, movies and seasonal social events. Life skills such as budgeting, shopping, laundry and cooking, are learned in one on one sessions or in small groups. Everyone gets a birthday cake. Some of the most moving events are the memorial services when the tenants share their memories of a neighbour who will be profoundly missed. Functioning like a large family, the tenants, staff and volunteers share the joys and sorrows of life together.

We would invite and encourage staff of the *Record* to visit Portland Place to experience first hand the sense of community that flourishes there.

REV. DR. CHARLOTTE STUART,

CHAIR, PORTLAND PLACE, TORONTO

### Editor Responds:

Firstly, our apologies for missing Portland Place in our feature. We look forward to visiting soon. Secondly, we missed many other Presbyterian supported missions which are not located in Toronto and hope to bring those stories to these pages in short order. ■

## Looking to Advertise in the Presbyterian Record?

### Please note our NEW advertising deadlines for upcoming issues

June 2008 — by April 15, 2008

July/August 2008 — by May 15, 2008

September — by July 15, 2008

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# People & Places

For more People & Places submissions, please visit our website:  
[www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)



Ron Fischer (centre) graduated from Presbyterian College, Montreal, last year but decided to help out at Erskine, Ottawa, as they went through the very difficult process of closing their church and amalgamating with Westminster. This February he was ordained by the Presbytery of Ottawa, when Rev. Jack Archibald preached and Rev. Shaun Seaman gave the charge. Fischer is moving to St. Andrew's, Nanaimo, B.C. On our website, another photo.



At its 75th anniversary the Dr. Margaret Strang WMS, First, Chatham, Ont., awarded Joan Fletcher the honour of a life-time membership. Some might say she has the WMS in her blood, since her mother and grandmother have also received the distinction. Helen Glassco presents Joan her citation. On our website catch a photo of a legacy of WMS presidents.



Grandfather Alexander Sutherland, a long-time member of St. George's, River John, N.S., approached Rev. Jeanette Fleischer about being baptized on behalf of his partner, Sandy Ashby. It seemed like a good idea and before you knew it eight members of the clan went to the font. "It was a real joy, it was a wonderful day," said Fleischer. Pictured: Sara Sutherland, Ashley Sutherland, Julie Sutherland, Fleischer, Casey Wulfe, David Sutherland (front), Braden Wulfe, Ashby, Sutherland and Cara Sutherland.



Kootenay Presbytery and St. Stephen's, Creston, B.C., were pleased to host a recognition service in February for Rev. Gwen Brown who is seen here between Presbytery Moderator Rev. Don Lindsay and Clerk of Session Colin Sharp.



Knox, New Westminster, B.C., isn't amongst the larger churches in our denomination but it has one of the biggest hearts, and imagination, and global reach. As the additional photos on our website will show, they really educated themselves about the work our church does around the world, and then had a fundraiser which collected \$2,288.50 for PWS&D. It's a fantastic story—the story of PWS&D and of Knox! Seen here: Rev. Michael Koslowski, Sylvia Ingalls, Shelly Chandler, Victoria Chandler, Sarah Riedner and Marcia Douglas.



Rev. Dr. Alan McPherson was honoured with the title of Minister Emeritus by Central, Hamilton, Ont., where he was minister for 25 years. At the same service, the chapel which sits to the side of the sanctuary was named the McPherson Chapel in his honour. From left: Dr. Clyde Ervine, Kyra, Emily and Aimee, and behind them their grandparents, Alan and Maureen, plus Ms. Frances Searle, Clerk of Session. To learn more about McPherson's ministry, please see our website.



Cake of the month: Kenneth Thomson has served St. Gile's Kingsway, Etobicoke, Ont., tirelessly as an elder and envelope secretary for over 30 years, and also recently chaired the Leading With Care committee. He and Georgina deserve that cake! On our website, Ken gets a plaque.

## Had cake lately?

See [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca) for instructions on how to submit photos to People and Places in the digital age.

### How to Submit Images in a Digital Age:

Digital cameras make it easy to take photo—click and within seconds you can share a precious moment with friends and family half way around the planet. But the new technology—cameras, computers, scanners, camera phones—also create new concerns. Programs designed to share photographs easily via email radically shrink the digital size of images so they are no longer publishable in a print magazine. Holding a camera at arm's length, as we now do, instead of steady by the eye, means many photos are out of focus. Instructions continue on our website, [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)





A young member of the Bull Rock Dancers enlivens the Grand Entry Procession in Ottawa's Museum of Civilization where the Aboriginal and Church Leaders' Tour had its first stop on March 2. An estimated 500 people were in attendance. The second stop in Vancouver was also very well attended. The *Record* will feature the tour in the May 2008 issue.

# Formulating Identity

LMA continues thinking about the future. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

"WE HAVE TO RE-FORMULATE our identity," Rev. Daniel Cho told the Life and Mission Agency Committee in March. "And how it is articulated and communicated to ourselves and others, because that perception will reflect and influence our work."

The comment was spurred on by a visitor to his congregation who said that one of her Presbyterian relatives

told her not to talk about Jesus too much while visiting because "Presbyterians don't do that."

"I think sometimes we get caught up in the 'isms' and forget about the mission we are called to carry out," said Cho, committee convener. "What a disservice we do to ourselves when we don't embrace the freedom within our identity. It limits us and

how we do things. It would be an advantage for us to re-visit our identity; it helps us change, and to communicate God's message through us in different ways."

Women's Missionary Society president Druse Bryan reported that the society is currently embarking on a visioning process, and evaluating their membership and finances.



They have sent out a questionnaire to members and the WMS executive will discuss the responses at their next meeting to "discern what God has in store for the WMS."

Ann Taylor, president of the Atlantic Mission Society, also reported that it is a time of transition and identity-searching for the AMS. Members have expressed how important fellowship is to them and their groups, and the executive meeting in April will focus

**"I think sometimes we get caught up in the 'isms' and forget about the mission we are called to carry out"**

on fostering this fellowship, as well as developing groups and small group ministries. The society is excited about a youth initiative done in conjunction with Camp Geddie, where four youth being trained as camp leaders will also receive training as "youth mission animators" who will then travel to congregations and presbyterials to speak on mission and mission education, and how mission can be brought to life ("animated") to children and youth.

The recent decision of the WMS to cut back on its funding of regional staff from \$400,000 to \$200,000 beginning in 2009 precipitated the ongoing talks about regional staff. The

LMA, along with the WMS, hired a consultant in 2007 to review the regional staffing model that has been in place since 1994. The committee had an opportunity to review this report and its recommendations. The WMS was set to review the consultant's report at their Council Executive meeting in mid-March. A joint report was submitted to the Assembly Council at the end of March. The final report will be submitted to the General Assembly in June. A copy of the final report will also be sent to the regional staff and their respective regional staffing committees.

The committee also discussed several possible responses to an overture sent by the Presbytery of Seaway-Glengarry asking for national, ongoing funding to Presbyterian camps. Committee members agreed that camping is a valuable, much-needed ministry of the church. They sympathized with camps and the challenges they face, mostly which stem from financial worries. The committee's comments will help formulate a final response to take to General Assembly in June.

Concerns were also heard about the church's new website; and the search continues for a new associate secretary for the Communications and Resource Production department. ■

## Heart, Mind & Soul:

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**Plenary Speaker: Rev. Dr. Christine O'Reilly**

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An initiative of the Women in Ministry Committee

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## BUILDING HOPE

### Did you know?

"Flying on Your Own" is a three-day workshop that is designed for personal growth and healing. It was created for Aboriginal people by Aboriginal people.

Each year WICM sends 10 individuals to participate in a "Flying on Your Own" workshop. Each person examines how he or she uses avoidance and holds negative beliefs about themselves. Each one considers ways to heal and develop positive feelings.

Our facilitators are two highly regarded Aboriginal women. They bring with them wisdom and the use of traditional teachings to help individuals develop self esteem and begin their journey to wholeness.



**WICM**

There are many stories about the impact this essential program has on the lives of participants. Perhaps this is best summed up by a very moving comment, "No one knew what a wonderful smile she had until she took the program."

The cost to send one individual to "Flying on Your Own" is \$250.

### Can you help?

**Winnipeg Inner City Missions Of The Presbyterian Church In Canada**

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Winnipeg, MB R3C 4A7

**Flora House** 204-586-5494

**Anishinabe Fellowship Centre**  
204-942-8682

Charitable registration: #862942554RR0001

# The Health of Women in Ministry

Seeking the heart, mind and soul of leadership. BY DARA THOMPSON GOULET

ABOUT A YEAR AGO, a group of female students at Presbyterian College, Montreal were discussing how we managed our lives outside of school. We shared our experiences of answering God's call by meeting the demands of student life while also being wife or mother, single woman or friend, and in many cases, living far away from home in order to do so. We laughed and groaned as we swapped stories. Yet as we witnessed a new sense of solidarity emerging, we learned that we were not alone.

So when we heard about the Women in Ministry Committee's plans to hold a retreat on Church Leader Health, we immediately wanted to be involved. The Heart, Mind & Soul Conference and Retreat at Presbyterian College (May 27-30, 2008) will provide, as one of my fellow organizers Katherine Burgess said, "vital

importance of time away, of time with like-minded people, of re-creation and recreation." Another organizer, Barbara Duguid, likewise insisted, "Like Mary, I need to depart and be with Elizabeth for a while. Like Jesus, I need to step aside and make time to commune with God."

**"This is one way to think outside the box. It gives the church a chance to do something different"**

Marion Taylor, Old Testament professor at Wycliffe College, recently spoke at our college. She insisted that "our foremothers of faith" interpreted scripture differently than did men because their experiences differed. Taylor encouraged the women and men in the audience to look to these role models to understand what these women wrestled with and what they learned.

She further explained that "women look to women for learning."

The new circumstances of ministry in the 21st century require us to respond creatively and to pool our resources not only to survive, but to flourish. If you are a woman in a leadership position within the Presbyterian Church, we invite you to join us in benefiting from the deep reservoir of wisdom, knowledge and experience found in our contemporary church, with the hopes that our time together will lead to deeper Christian strength of the heart, mind, and soul. ■

*Dara Thompson Goulet is a student at the Presbyterian College. The Women in Ministry Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada invites all women in leadership to join us for networking, equipping, restoration, and learning strategies for whole person health.*

## Foodgrains turns 25

THE ONTARIO BRANCH of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year with a celebration on June 22 to be held at Country Heritage Park near Milton, Ont. A catered chicken and rib barbeque will be served at 5:30. Seating is limited and tickets are available before June 8 for \$30.

Organizers of the anniversary event are putting together a presentation of the history of the Foodgrains Bank in Ontario, and are asking for

supporters to email or mail photos of people and Foodgrains Bank-related activities for the presentation. Please identify the people, place, activity and the year. Photos will be returned if an address is printed on the back. Deadline for pictures is May 17.

### Other CFGB events:

Annual Spring Food Justice Workshops: Various Ontario locations between April 14 and 18. These workshops on biofuels will be led by CFGB's policy advisor Paul Hagerman, who

has extensive experience working with farmers in Canada and the developing world.

Second Annual Food Justice Event, April 24-27: Held at Hidden Acres Camp near New Hamburg, Ont., this weekend event will explore the intersection of food, faith and justice through a combination of plenary sessions and smaller group activities.

For more information please visit [www.foodgrainsbank.ca](http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca). ■ *—with files from CFGB*



# Trinity, Oro Survives

THE FATE OF TRINITY, ORO, Ont., has been decided. At a meeting of the Barrie Presbytery in February, the interim moderator, Rev. Neal Mathers, reported Trinity is healthy and warrants continuation.

"The congregation has survived, and it's doing well," he told the *Record*.

Trinity averages about 150 adults and children each Sunday, where services have been led by various guest ministers since the congregation was split last October. Former minister Rev. Carey Nieuwhof left the Presbyterian Church to found a new congregation linked to a non-denominational conservative church in the United States, and took most of the 1,000-plus members with him.

Mathers, who is minister at Emmanuel, Nottawa, Ont., said finances are healthy, and that loyal Trinity-goers have already been involved in community outreach, have developed a budget for the year, held a planning workshop to which about 50 people attended, enjoy a weekly Bible study, and are holding a new members class, with members officially welcomed in April. Soon after that, new elders will be elected (assessor elders have functioned up to this point) and it is hoped that the call for a new minister will follow shortly after.

Through a visioning process, the congregation created a mission statement, declaring that they are "a caring, hospitable, passionate, joyful, excited and somewhat anxious faith community," seeking to reach multigenerational families, and seeing themselves growing from a pastoral-sized church (50-150 attending worship) into a program-sized congregation with between 150-300 adherents and members.

"It is clear to us that there is a God-driven spirit of vitality present at Trinity Community Presbyterian Church," notes the report to presbytery. ■ -AM

# Inspiration from India



PWS&D is working with the Church of North India to improve the health and nutrition of vulnerable people in rural communities. In 120 villages, community health volunteers conduct home visits and teach about hygiene, nutrition, general health care and provide immunizations. The dedication of the volunteers is inspiring—together, we are transforming our world.

Photo: Anne Johnson (Ward)

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**Yes! I want to help transform our world.**

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Beth Yando

# Eye-Opening Trip

WCC Youth Steward sheds light on church issues. BY EMILY WIERENGA

TEENAGER BETH YANDO spent part of February in Geneva, Switzerland, as a steward at the World Council of Churches' central committee meetings. The committee meets occasionally between assemblies to further discuss the council's policies, programs and budget. For Yando it was an eye-opening experience as she joined young people from around the world with very different points of view but all committed to ecumenism. "The very process of dialogue enables each of us to become more comfortable in our own faith stance and secure enough in our relationship as Christian churches to open ourselves even further in inter-religious dialogue and relationships."

The Prince Albert, Sask., native and

member of Mistawasis was the Presbyterian Church's youth representative at the WCC meeting, and was supported by both Youth in Mission and International Ministries.

Over the first few days, youth stewards were involved in orientation seminars to learn about the ecumenical movement, what the WCC is, what it has accomplished, and challenges that churches are facing. "In our discussions, we encouraged the challenging of opinions and through that we have all come to a better understanding of what we believe. Our faith in God has become stronger since being forced to answer those tough questions of what we believe, why we believe it, what leads our faith to where it is."

**'Our faith in God has become stronger since being forced to answer those tough questions'**

Yando's Presbyterian roots run deep. Her mother, Beth Anne, is a diaconal minister, and her father, George, is the pastor of Mistawasis and interim moderator of the Presbytery of Northern Saskatchewan. Beth has been involved in her church through Sunday school and camp ministry. The WCC Stewards Program was her first international youth missions venture.

When asked to comment on his daughter's recent experience, Yando told the *Record*, "It's been amazing to see the broadening of her appreciation for the wider church, to hear her insights—and her frustrations—about the workings of the WCC, and perhaps most of all, her deepening respect for others who are seeking to live out their Christian faith in contexts very different from her own."

He continues: "Involvement in the WCC Stewards Program includes an expectation that the stewards will return to their home countries and continue to be involved in ecumenical endeavours, by developing and carrying out some sort of project to encourage ecumenical dialogue and cooperation. Beth is looking forward to taking this on and making it part of her own faith journey."

Despite her passion, Beth Yando is aware of the many challenges still facing the WCC. "Even after 60 years with ecumenical collaboration through the WCC, the relationship between some churches is still very fragile and there is still so much work that needs to be done."

The Presbyterian Church's representative to the WCC was Rev. Will Ingram, St. Andrew's, King St., Toronto. You can read his blog at [www.standrewstoronto.org/wcc](http://www.standrewstoronto.org/wcc). ■

*Emily Wierenga is a freelance writer.*



## Hold G8 to Promises

THE GROUP OF EIGHT countries have made a lot of promises "in good faith" a political science professor said at a public gathering in Winnipeg, but they "have now fallen badly behind. However, they have delivered big in the past and still control their own fate. But from their people they now need a push and advice on what their priorities and path should be."

John Kirton, of the G8 Research Group based at the Munk Centre for International Studies at the University of Toronto, was speaking at a Canadian Council of Churches sponsored event. It was the first in a series of public events—under the banner, For Just Such a Time as This—launched by the CCC. Future events are planned in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

For more information on the tour please contact [hamilton@ccc-cce.ca](mailto:hamilton@ccc-cce.ca). ■

## Learn, Help

WANT TO KNOW what's going on in the world and how you can help? Go to [www.presbyterian.ca](http://www.presbyterian.ca), click on Our Mission, in the top left hand corner, click on Presbyterian World Service and Development, and from the menu on the right side click on Emergency Appeals.

There you will learn more about the stories behind the headlines and the ways you can help.

Or start at the beginning: click on International Ministries and read the prayer letters from mission staff around the world.

Again at the home page, click on Mission Education and learn even more about the stories behind the stories. Or click to the WMS and learn more about what the council is doing around the world.

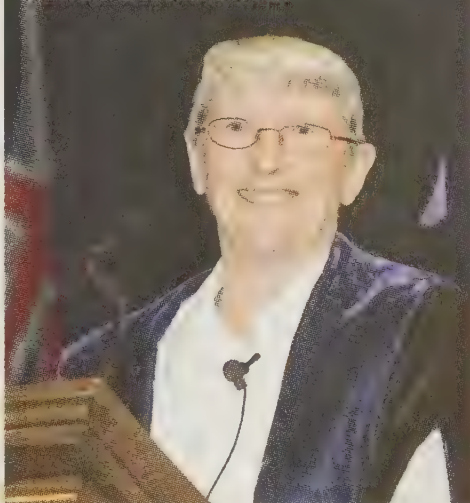
Globalization and information technology bring the world to our homes; and, our homes to the world. And, if you'd like you can click through to take one of the many trips to go visit that world and our missions. ■



Scenes from Knox College's 2007 convocation

# College Convocations

Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon



### St. Andrew's Hall at the Vancouver School of Theology

**Date:** Monday, May 12, 2008

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Location:** Shaughnessy Heights United Church

**Speaker:** Dr. Robert Jewitt

*Honorary D.D.:* None given this year, but they will be installing VST's new Chancellor, Louise Ralston.

### Knox College, Toronto

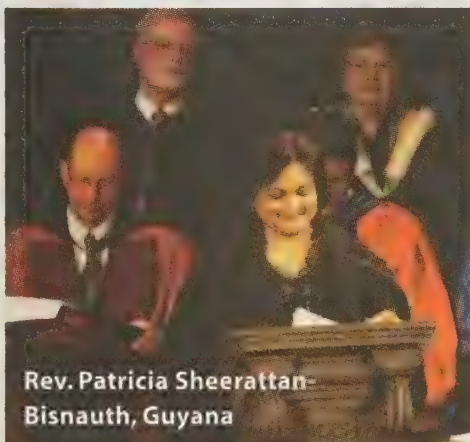
**Date:** Wednesday, May 14, 2008

**Time:** 7:30 p.m.

**Location:** Convocation Hall, University of Toronto

**Speaker:** Rev. Dr. John A. Vissers, Principal, Presbyterian College

*Honorary D.D.:* Rev. Lynda Reid and Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Johnston



Rev. Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth, Guyana

### Presbyterian College, Montreal

**Date:** Thursday, May 8, 2008

**Time:** 7.30 p.m.

**Location:** Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal

**Speaker:** Rev. Dr. J.H. (Hans)

Kouwenberg, Moderator of the 133rd General Assembly





## Kobia resigns as WCC head

ENI—Kenyan Methodist, Rev. Samuel Kobia, effectively resigned from his position as general secretary of the World Council of Churches in February during a regular meeting of the central committee. Kobia was expected to run for a second term.

The WCC has 349 member churches, representing 560 million Christians worldwide. Kobia was the first African elected to the post and he took office in January 2004 for his five-year term. Previous general secretaries were W. A. Visser't Hooft, from the Netherlands (1948-1966); Eugene Carson Blake, from the United States (1966-1972); Philip Potter, from Dominica, West Indies (1972-1984); Emilio Castro, from Uruguay (1985-1992); and Konrad Raiser, from Germany (1993 to 2003). Kobia was the third Methodist to hold the post.

Prior to the committee meetings Bishop Martin Hein, a member of the WCC governing body from the Evangelical Church in Germany had complained that the council was failing to make its presence felt sufficiently in the world. He suggested the WCC had been unable to develop "visions and perspectives that are able to be communicated," and he said that Kobia was traveling too much outside Geneva.

A doctorate Kobia received from Fairfax University in the United States was

determined to be a counterfeit and the WCC removed all reference to the degree from its website.

## Knocking works

ENI—At 2.25 per cent, Jehovah's Witnesses in the United States experienced the largest percentage increase in membership among the top 25 denominations, according to the US National Council of Churches' 2008 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches. Jehovah's Witnesses are the 25th largest church in the States with 1,069,530 members.

The Episcopal (Anglican) Church USA had the largest percentage decline of 4.15 per cent. Dogged by controversy the last few years, Episcopalians now number 2,154,572 members.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) with 3,025,740 members recorded a decrease of 2.36 per cent. American Baptist Churches in the USA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America also showed losses of under two per cent. The Southern Baptist Convention showed a small increase of less than a quarter of a percentage point. Mormons grew by 1.56 per cent; and Catholics by .83 per cent.

## Apology with action

ENI—Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologized to the "Stolen Generations"—Indigenous people removed from their families under old policies aimed at assimilation—in February. Church leaders applauded the apology and called for practical steps to address Indigenous disadvantage.

"The Stolen Generations have held a special place in the heart of many of our faithful," the National Council of Churches in Australia said in a statement released in February. "We rejoice with them that finally their life experiences have been recognized and that we, as a nation, can accept our failures of the past." Australia's major Christian denominations have already apologized for their role in separating Indigenous families.

Rudd said he would follow the apology with action, noting that Indigenous life expectancy is 17 years lower than the

national average. "Symbolism is important but, unless the great symbolism of reconciliation is accompanied by even greater substance, it is little more than a clanging gong," he said, echoing biblical words found in St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

## Media-Church training

ENI—"The fact that a newspaper needs a short sentence, or that radio stations have only a few minutes in which to report, often does not fit in with how we talk in church. A sermon lasts at least 15 minutes, and a theological lecture at least 45," German Lutheran Bishop Margot Kässmann said in a speech at the Protestant Media Academy in Berlin.

Journalists sometimes mock the Church because it takes so long to say things, she noted, while church people may scorn the media for looking for sound bites.

"But I like to point out that most of Jesus' parables probably last no longer than a minute and a half," said Kässmann. "I often find that people in the Church are afraid of the media. To understand the media, we need as church people to talk to media people. Also to understand the pressures under which things are produced."

## Scots perpetuate sectarianism

ENI—The moderator of the Church of Scotland, Rev. Sheilagh Kesting, has warned that anti-English bigotry in Scotland is akin to sectarianism and should not be tolerated. She stirred a recent heated debate in the Scottish press when she said that anti-English banter during sporting events between the two countries could be harmful and might lead to more sinister behaviour.

Kesting made her remarks in an address for Lent after visiting London. Referring to the often turbulent history of football games between the largely Protestant-supported soccer club Glasgow Rangers and the largely Catholic-supported team Celtic, she said, "In Scotland, we have got used to football as a context for perpetuating sectarianism so I don't think we can pass off lightly anti-English remarks which are made during matches. It is too easy to dismiss this as healthy rivalry. It is not." ■



# My Global Footprint

Even my homemade muffin is evil. BY ANDREW FAIZ

**M**y shirt bears the logo of a popular designer who came to the fore 20 years ago. I paid about \$30 for it at a discount clothing store which sells overruns and the previous year's fashions. The shirt would have cost me about twice as much if I had bought it in season. It was "tailored" in Indonesia. I have no idea where the cloth was made, where the buttons were manufactured, but I'm pretty certain it wasn't in the United States where the company which slapped on the logo is based.

My pants—a pair of black denim—were made in Thailand. My undershirt in India. My shorts in Bangladesh. I can't find a label on my socks, but my shoes are from China, even though, like my shirt and other articles, they bear a North American logo. Asia has dressed me today.

This morning for breakfast I had a banana from Ecuador. And coffee from Uganda, which I bought at a fair trade store in my neighbourhood. To make the coffee I used an appliance designed and built in Italy. The banana was organic but not fair trade, and like the coffee it too was transported by the usual combination of planes, trains and automobiles.

I also had a blueberry muffin—I'm writing this in early March, so the blueberries were from someplace thousands of miles away, though the muffin was made a day earlier in our kitchen. The other ingredients—flour, sugar, butter, milk—were bought at my local grocery store and are likely not from the Toronto area. Perhaps the milk and butter are 100-mile local, but certainly not the sugar, which probably traveled thousands of miles, and is likely grown by poor indentured serfs who work for powerful bottom-line corporations. Like you I try not to think of how I am the evil in the world. It was a good muffin.

The equatorial south fed me this morning. And while the dairy products are local, I am guessing that the amount of energy needed to produce milk, butter, cheese and other yummys in 15-below weather in Central Ontario is probably in the same range as the amount of energy needed to get me a fresh banana from South America. It's a guess.

Last week I had some problems with my home Internet and called my service. I spoke to a woman in Nova Scotia. She was very pleasant. In our conversation we determined the problem was actually with my hardware and I called my computer manufacturer and spoke with Rashid in New Delhi, India. Bright guy, very eager to help and gave me a couple really good tips. We spoke for 45 minutes. I needed

**I can't find a label on my socks, but my shoes are from China, even though, like my shirt and other articles, they bear a North American logo. Asia has dressed me today**

to replace a computer part and I gave him my credit card number which I will pay from the money I earn working for Presbyterian Canadians. The part arrived a few days later from a warehouse in the upper United States but was made someplace in the Pacific Rim.

Which is also where most of my iPod is from. While designed in the States more than half of it is from away. Its hard drive is attributed to Japan's Toshiba but may well have been manufactured in the Philippines. Or China (which is where my Blackberry was probably made). Korea contributes a portion. A 30g iPod Classic has 451 parts.

In a report widely circulated two years ago, there were accusations of massive (upto 200,000 employees) factories, under armed guard, making various iPods. Employees were said to make less than \$100/month living in company compounds where they had to turn half their income back for lodging. Apple, the iPod company, responded it was adhering to industry standards.

I love the iPod click wheel and last summer when the family drove east cross Canada we loved having our 3,000+ song library fit in the palm of our hand. Like any other multinational, I try not to worry about how I am the evil in the world. ■

*Andrew Faiz is the managing editor of the Presbyterian Record. You can reach him at [mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca)*

# Soil, food & faith

Whoever is joined with all the living has hope.

BY NORMAN WIRZBA

**H**ave you ever wondered how Adam got his name? Given all the possibilities, and the obvious importance of naming, we need to know why this particular name was given and not some other. As it turns out, all the clues we need are found in the story itself.

When God made heaven and earth, the land was initially dry and barren. There was no one to “till the ground” (Gen. 2:5), no one who could work the land to make it productive of life. So God “formed Adam from the dust of the ground (adamah)” and breathed life into him (Gen. 2:7). Then God planted a “garden of delight”—this is what the Garden of Eden literally means—and put Adam in it. His job was clearly defined: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it (Gen. 2:15).”

There is deep significance in what has just been communicated. The biblical writer is making it clear that who we are and what we are to do are inescapably tied to the life of soil. Our identity and vocation, that which is most fundamental

about our life, are defined and understood in terms of the health and vitality of the soil from which we literally come and toward which we eventually return. If the soil suffers, we suffer. Moreover, the soil’s suffering is a clear sign that we have not lived up to our divinely appointed vocation to be soil-tillers, soil-keepers, soil-servers, soil-preservers. The first human is called Adam because his life makes sense, and is potentially termed “good,” in terms of the ground (adamah) that is his body and the source of his life.

Not many of us any longer have a perspective from the soil. We live in concrete, steel and glass worlds, worlds that are as free from dirt and bugs as possible. Moreover, we are simply too busy to notice the ground beneath our feet (and roads and sidewalks), as we dream and plan for worlds of convenience and success. If we had an agrarian perspective, however, we would know “in our bones” and through our stomachs that our well-being is inextricably tied to the health of the land. What is obvious to every farmer and ➤





gardener—that our bodies live through countless other bodies—is now mostly lost to us. More than we care to admit, we suffer from a condition of “ecological amnesia,” a condition in which we naively think we can live well while the bio-geo-physical processes all around us go into decline.

One of the best ways for us to remember our connection to soil and our need to take care of it is to start paying more attention to food and the ways that we eat. Eating is fundamental. Every time we take a bite or gulp we bear witness to the fact that our life consists of a bewildering variety of memberships that we call creation. Eating joins us in multiple ways to the lives of microorganisms and worms in the soil, to the gifts of photosynthesis and soil regeneration, to the lives of plants and animals, and to the diverse cultural and culinary traditions that give us tasty recipes and times of feasting and fellowship. Food simply is the source of our health. When properly engaged, it can also be a source of justice, peace and joy.

Looking around, we now see that much of our current food production does not serve the health and vitality of garden and farm soils. Soil is eroding at rates far faster than it can be restored (if current erosion rates continue, differing regions will be exhausted within 100 years). What is not being eroded is being severely taxed and poisoned with our heavy regimens of fertilizers and pesticides. Most farm fields today have precious little organic, life-giving matter in them. As my friend and soil scientist Wes Jackson has put it, “We hammer the soil and then put it on chemical [fossil-fuel dependent] life-support.”

When we destroy soil, we also compromise the many forms of plant and animal life that depend upon it. Viewed theologically, what our destruction amounts to is the de-creation of the world, the slow, stupid, sinful unravelling of the memberships that keep life on the move.

One way to think about sin is to see it as the refusal to be creatures, as the rejection of our belonging to and responsibility for the land. Already in the first garden story, human beings were tempted by the thought of becoming gods themselves. As gods they could be free of the limits and demands of mortal life. This temptation has continued throughout the ages, and is now clearly expressed in industrial food systems that have it as their goal to free food of all biological traces. When food is reduced to a “commodity,” then we no longer need to accept responsibility for the natural memberships that brought it into being. We can see food as a human

invention rather than the gift of God that it in fact is.

Many of our “foods” are highly processed and laced with artificial flavours and preservatives. Looking at the ingredients list, you will see that these commodities do not contain anything recognizable (or pronounceable!) as food. From an industrial point of view, this makes perfect economic sense. When food ceases to be tied to creation’s rhythms and limits, then it can be controlled and made most profitable. The effects of our industrial food systems, however, can no longer be ignored: childhood obesity and early-onset diabetes, ubiquitous high-fructose corn syrup, acid reflux and perpetual heartburn, e. coli and salmonella poisoning, highly stressed and mistreated chicken, pigs, and cattle, antibiotic-resistant pathogens, pesticide-resistant “weeds,” and destroyed rural landscapes and communities.

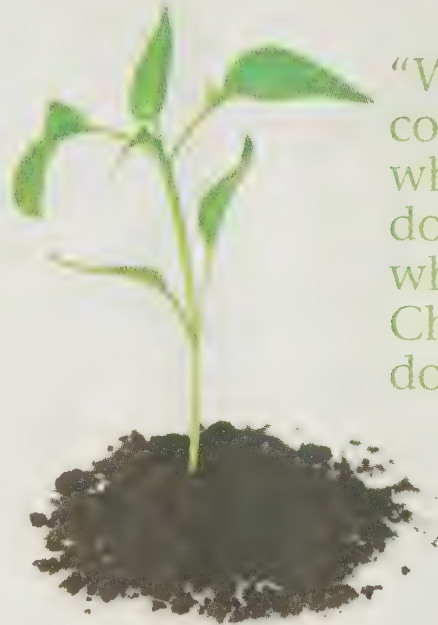
Scripture’s writers were not naïve about the human condition. They understood how difficult it is for us to be the true “earthlings” we were created to be. Adam fails, and he and his family are banished from paradise. But God does not leave us without hope. In the person Noah we are given the opportunity to see what a true “Adam” looks like.

As we all know, Noah is famous for building an ark that saves a remnant of the creation that God is going to wipe out by flood. It is

impossible for us to imagine the sorrow that would lead God to destroy what had already been proclaimed as good and as a delight. So sinful had humanity become that the whole creation no longer reflected God’s life-giving presence. People were failing at imaging God’s ways with the world.

This story, however, is about much more than Noah simply preserving “seed stock” for another go. Rabbinic traditions like to point out that the real significance of the story lies in the fact that Noah was the only one who demonstrated the faithfulness and patience it takes to care for creation. Think for a moment about the knowledge, affection, and curiosity required for Noah to keep all the animals alive for many months in the ark. Unlike his contemporaries (and today’s industrial food executives), who saw creation as nothing more than a resource to fulfill their selfish ambition, Noah appreciated the integrity of God’s creatures. He understood that each creature is deserving of its own forms of delight, beginning most basically with adequate and appropriate provision for their dietary needs. Can you imagine the attention and work it would take to prepare all those menus?

According to one rabbinic tradition, Noah did not sleep



“We are more concerned with what others can do for us than what we (as Christians) can do for others”



the entire time he was on the ark. The reason: he so much enjoyed feeding the animals under his care that he did not want to miss one opportunity to show generous and grateful hospitality. In this respect Noah showed himself to be like God, who also is sometimes understood as the host of all creation. In fact, John of Damascus, an early church father, once suggested that God's creating/creative work represents one great act of hospitality in which God "makes room" for what is not God to participate in the divine life.

Noah is the true Adam, a "sustainer of life," because he knows what it means to take care of creation. The ark was no mere escape vessel. It was, rather, the training ground in which the skills of attention and care, and the dispositions of humility and affection, could be honed and refined. Noah emerges from the ark as a "man of the soil" (Gen. 9:20), as one who will lead humanity into a new life-preserving covenant with God.

For many of us, it is difficult to imagine how we might be imitators of Noah as the one who leads us into true creatureliness. After all, how many of us have the skills to build an ark or the knowledge it takes to feed and care for even a tiny sample of the animals we live with? Though we are living in a time when the waters are rising—this time due to climate change—it is hard to know where and how to begin.

One of the most practical and far-reaching ways we can bear witness to a healthy creation is by paying greater attention to our eating habits. Obviously, we need to burn less fossil fuel, waste less topsoil, degrade and use up less water. But one of the best ways for us to do that is to eat responsibly grown food produced closer to home, either by shopping at farmers' markets or by buying directly from farmers themselves via "community-supported agriculture" (CSAs). The average food item travels a distance of approximately 1,500 to 2,000 kilometres to get to our plate. That represents a lot of fuel for transport. What is not factored in, however, is all the fuel necessary just to get the plants growing and harvested (fertilizer production and application depend on a lot of fossil fuel use too). By many estimates, one calorie of food energy presupposes spending/wasting 10 calories of fossil fuel energy. This is simply unacceptable. It is also hugely inefficient and destructive. According to an economist's logic, it would be better for us to drink the oil directly!

We can become better caretakers of the land if we support local food economies that grow food without all the fuel, fertilizers, pesticides, and stress that now circulate throughout our industrial food networks. Ideally, we could each commit to



Buying food at farmers' markets not only helps the environment; it connects us to the land and reminds us that we're part of it.

starting our own gardens, not with the aim of growing all our own food—a massive undertaking—but with the hope that we will learn to be more respectful and patient with the gifts of God. Churches should take the lead by starting community gardens all across the land, transforming lawns into beautiful oases that produce food and flowering plants alike. The potential for spiritual formation and community outreach is tremendous.

To be a gardener or farmer is to know that we don't control the processes of birth, life, death, and regeneration. The best that we can do is attend to God's life-giving processes going on all around us, exercise caution and care, and then gratefully receive what God so abundantly provides.

Creation today is in serious distress. Everywhere we turn there is yet more bad news of this species going extinct, that habitat being destroyed, some new disease working its way through a population. It is easy for us to lose hope in a time when we need it most.

Ecclesiastes tells us that "whoever is joined with all the living has hope ..." (Ecc. 9:4). Eating is the daily reminder and opportunity for us to join with creation in ways that will further God's life-giving ways. When we commit to eating and living in ways that draw us more deeply into the health of the world, we will find there the gracious presence of God at work. Sensing and tasting God's life-giving presence is the true inspiration for our hope. As we devote our attention and energy to the well-being of each other and all God's creation, we will fulfill our divinely appointed vocation, which is nothing more and nothing less than to become worthy of our first and enduring name—Adam. ■

*Prof. Norman Wirzba teaches philosophy at Georgetown College in Kentucky.*

# Walking gently

How congregations can help save the planet and money too.

BY IAN GARTSHORE

As stewards of the earth, Presbyterians are increasingly becoming aware of our need to walk more gently on the earth, to use energy wisely and not squander the financial resources we have been given. But while most citizens of Canada have been pushing governments to move toward sustainability, many congregations have been reluctant to invest in measures to save energy. However, now that energy prices have begun to increase at rates far above inflation, congregations and individuals have begun to realise the value in energy conservation and renewable energy sources. Congregational budgets are already tight enough without paying higher heating bills.

Two main barriers typically slow congregations from making the needed investments. The first is money. The second is a lack of understanding or knowledge about what is possible. Fortunately, once congregations begin to grasp what is possible, and the savings that can be had (not to mention the theological imperative for stewardship), then

the concerns about money tend to fade away. (For individuals and families there is another barrier to making changes: lifestyles. But this is a subject for another article.)

## THE COST OF THE STATUS QUO

Let us first talk about the cost of not making needed changes to the church building. For those who are heating with oil: treasurers already know the painful reality of the price hikes. While a recession in the United States will help to dampen prices in the short term, the long-term outlook is not cheery. The reality is that the world has been using more oil than has been discovered for more than a quarter of a century; the demand is now beginning to outstrip the supply. Prices can only go up as long as this trend continues.

Once demand routinely exceeds supply, prices will rise very quickly. When the United States experienced the Organization of Arab Oil Producing Countries embargo in 1973, the resulting five per cent shortfall of crude oil supply resulted ➤









St. Gabriel's Passionate Parish, Toronto, is a new building with energy saving features: a living wall, a glass wall, water conservation and many other elements.

heat from the outside air and pumping it into the interior of the building. During the summer this process can be reversed, offering low-cost air conditioning.

Air-source heat pumps are reasonable in price as compared to ground-source heat pumps (otherwise called "geo-thermal," requiring digging wells or excavating a large field), and are very inexpensive to run. Ground-source heat pumps can pay for themselves through their much reduced energy costs, in larger buildings, in less than 10 years. After that the savings keep on adding up.

in prices spiking more than 200 per cent.

Natural gas is only a few years from reaching the same point. Electricity prices have been moving up rapidly in most provinces, and will continue to do so, even in hydro-electric-rich provinces such as British Columbia.

Unless there is a major world-wide depression or depopulation, the reality is that the cost of fossil fuels, and the electricity produced by them, will begin to outstrip the ability of many congregations to keep their buildings heated and lit. Such price increases have already contributed to the closure of some smaller churches.

### ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF HEATING

**WOOD**—Newer technologies have created wood-burning devices that operate just like today's oil or natural gas furnaces. Wood waste is turned into compressed wood pellets that are used in northern climates to heat both homes and commercial buildings. The pellets are automatically fed into a burning chamber when the programmable thermostat calls for heat. Pellets are delivered just as is heating oil.

**HEAT PUMPS**—Usually attached to the current furnace, these pumps work just like refrigerators, but in reverse, extracting

**SOLAR ENERGY**—Unfortunately the high cost of solar voltaics (which turns sunlight directly into electricity) presently makes this technology unaffordable for most consumers. Thankfully it appears that prices will fall in the next few years as new technologies drive down the price of this energy source.

Solar hot water, however, is far more affordable, especially for multi-residential units and buildings that use a fair amount of hot water. These panels or tubes have become very efficient (converting as much as 90 per cent of the sun's energy into hot water). Church buildings that utilise radiant heat can easily take advantage of the sun, especially if they are located in a sunnier part of Canada. Even if the sunshine is iffy at times, solar can be matched with the current heating, reducing operating costs and improving the environment.

Even buildings that are currently heated with electricity can be retrofitted with mini-radiators, fed by standard-sized copper tubing, greatly reducing the heating costs.

Another very simple yet effective method of tapping into the sun's energy is through drawing air through sun-exposed panels, which pre-warms the air before it is pulled into the building. Ideal for larger buildings that have a central location



for drawing in air (such as a furnace or other ventilation system), these devices can make a huge difference. In addition, during the summer the fan can be reversed—thus cooling the otherwise warmest wall of the building.

The wonderful thing about solar heating is that once the equipment has been installed, the system is virtually inflation-proof. Relative to other heat sources, a solar system will increase its rate of return every year. And, if needed, such systems can be moved to a new church building. All that is required is an unobstructed southern exposure.

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Being efficient is by far the most cost-effective way of approaching energy challenges, one that simultaneously reduces both pollution and greenhouse gases. When considering different options for any building, this should be the first place to begin.

**FURNACES**—Many congregations and homeowners have smartly invested in higher-efficiency furnaces and boilers, appreciably lowering their energy costs. Most newer natural gas and oil-fired furnaces now operate at efficiency rates of 85 per cent or higher, a far cry from the 50 per cent rates common to many older furnaces. The only caution is to ensure that such buildings have an adequate ventilation system (also important to heat pumps) to handle this newer technology. Without enough air movement through the furnace or air handler, the equipment suffers premature failure.

**LIGHTS**—A major user of energy in church buildings is lighting. Here, too, new technology is resulting in considerable energy savings, even while providing superior light. Schools and shopping malls, for example, are finding that replacing old fluorescent tubes with the newer technology tubes saves 40 per cent or more on electricity bills. Compared to incandescent fixtures (the common light bulb), the savings are about double. Replacing lighting is an especially important measure in those parts of the building that are frequently used.

**WINDOWS**—Glass insulates even more poorly than an uninsulated wall. As a result, windows are typically the coldest surface of any building. This is even truer of single-pane leaded glass.

While most of us love the look and atmosphere provided by stained glass windows, such windows are horrible wasters of heat. I do not think that Jesus would approve of such a



Lighting is a major use of energy in churches. Replacing old light bulbs can save as much as 40 per cent on electricity bills.

poor stewardship of energy.

However, the good news is that it is very possible to attach window-grade acrylic (clear plastic) panels to these windows, allowing the beauty of the window to shine through while potentially quadrupling (or better) the energy efficiency (and resulting warmth). While the window-grade acrylic is more expensive than glass, it is also about four times as warm, and won't deteriorate (no yellowing, cracking, etc.). Such additions can also help to protect those invaluable stained-glass windows.

Even double-paned windows can be improved considerably by adding these panels. What about windows that open seasonally? The panels can be used as "storm windows," added to either the outside or the inside of the current windows. While more expensive, the double- or triple-paned argon-filled, low e-squared windows are also excellent choices, since they are up to twice as warm as older double-paned windows.

**SEAL AND INSULATE**—Uninsulated basement floors and below-grade walls rob buildings of significant amounts of heat—potentially as much as does the ceiling.

One of the most neglected areas in buildings is heat loss due to drafts. While it is important to have some supply of fresh air, especially in homes and offices, most of our buildings are too drafty. Seldom-used areas, such as sanctuaries and church classrooms, do not need to have air leakages (classrooms do need air from the rest of the building).

Sealing air leaks is the least expensive option for saving money and the planet. While they are often labour-intensive, such measures can easily be learned and employed by volunteers within the congregation. The most typical places to ➤

examine are window and door casements (the hidden space between a door frame and the wall), leaky windows (the old aluminum sliders are still too common), gaps where the walls meet the floors, light switches and outlets on outside walls especially, leaks where chimneys meet the upper floor ceiling, gaps around services that come through outside walls (such as gas lines, phone lines, etc.), and plumbing that runs through outside walls. An investment of less than \$200 can pay for itself in less than a month.

Because buildings act like chimneys, drawing in cooler air on all floors and pushing warm air through into the attic and leaks in the cathedral ceiling, it is very important to seal any places where air can be forced through. Watch especially for light fixture bases (pot-lighting and flush fluorescent fixtures are the worst) and any breaks in the top-floor ceiling.

One of the most energy-efficient appliances available is the lowly ceiling fan, as it pushes that warmed air back down to where it is needed, slowing the process of losing the heat to the outside. Ceiling fans also help to cool people in the summer.

Church buildings that have “fireside” rooms with a real fireplace have discovered that sealing up the chimney can save hundreds of dollars every year. Even chimneys with dampers are very leaky. If you wish to keep the fireplace, then have an efficient insert added. These inserts are several hundred times more efficient in burning wood and providing heat than are open fireplaces. They also pollute a lot less. In the not-so-distant future, municipalities will require all fireplaces to have such inserts.

Another area to consider is the often-forgotten hot water system. Many hot water heaters are poorly insulated, the hot water lines are usually uninsulated, and virtually all our drain lines happily carry away all that hot water back into the cold ground from which the incoming fresh water lines came. If we need an example of how wasteful we North Americans are, one need look no further.

Wherever possible, hot water lines need to be wrapped with the correctly sized pipe insulators (very inexpensive to purchase, but very effective). If the hot water heater feels warm to the touch then it needs to be wrapped with a “blanket” (ask any hardware store). If your church does not use hot water on a daily or frequent basis then consider replacing that old hot water tank with a “tank-less” (or “demand”) water heater. These units heat the water only when it is required, saving a lot of unnecessary heating between uses. Coupled with a solar hot water system, these units can save 75 per cent of the cost of heating water—a significant energy user in homes in particular.

A very low-tech device helps to capture some of the heat that would otherwise go down the drain. Called a drain water heat exchanger, the most common type passes incoming cold water over the surface of the drain, pre-warming the cold water in the process. They are safe to use, as a double-wall keeps the waste water from contaminating the fresh

water. These heat exchangers cost only a few hundred dollars, but capture a lot of otherwise wasted heat.

Other ideas include building a “green wall” or “green roof” (with live plants), installing water-saving toilets and urinals, planting native shrubbery that requires less watering, and using more natural lighting so as to reduce the need for lights.

**ECOENERGY**—All of these ideas are cost-effective for buildings if used in the appropriate situation. But here is the best part: if a congregation wishes to take the appropriate steps, fully 25 per cent of the cost of instituting these upgrades can be reimbursed by the federal government! (Search *ecoEnergy* online, relating to commercial buildings.)

This means that congregations can save energy, reduce their monthly bills, increase the value of their property, and become better stewards of the resources we have been blessed with. Also, Canada can come closer to meeting its international goals as well as move one step closer to becoming energy-sustainable. A win-win solution for all.

**BUT DON'T STOP THERE**—Consider how people living in similar areas can car pool to worship and other events. This old-fashioned idea improves members' sense of community and fellowship, increases participation and attendance (and finances), and greatly reduces pollution and injury on the roads, while increasing health and longevity.

Some urban congregations have opened some of their land to be used for community gardens. This gives churches an opportunity to meet their neighbours, provide a needed service, improve the quality of the food people are eating, and greatly reduces the amount of pollution, pesticide use, and other negative consequences of our modern agri-business food production system.

A few downtown churches are being approached by developers to better utilise the church property, rather than continue urban sprawl. Such buildings are likely to be far more energy-efficient, can provide heat for the sanctuary for a lower price, and reduce other costs.

Churches can also play a key role in spearheading community solutions, such as creating community/collective heating/cooling, building a local wind turbine, forming an energy co-operative as is commonly done in Europe, and playing a pivotal role in educating their own members on energy conservation.

What is perhaps more important is that congregations engage in another form of energy: to become energized by the possibilities and the resulting enthusiasm of saving our pocketbooks as well as the planet.

This kind of energy, we Christians know, is called the Spirit of God: the author of all energies; indeed of life itself. ■

*Ian Gartshore is an ordained Presbyterian minister, therapist and an energy coach. More tips for homeowners and renters are available on his business website, [www.shoreenergy.ca](http://www.shoreenergy.ca).*



# Home Grown Picnic

Congregations asked to hold a 100-mile meal.

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

Congregations can become aware of their environment and reduce their dependence on oil and fossil fuels with the help of KAIROS' Re-energize Campaign. Supported by the Presbyterian Church, KAIROS has created an initiative to educate, inspire and assist congregations, groups and individuals to take action. One of the most practical—and fun—suggestions is a 100-mile congregational meal.

Katharine Masterton, of the PCC's Justice Ministries department, said the campaign is an important initiative that congregations should strive to take part in—especially with Earth Day approaching on April 22.

"Sharing meals is a traditional part of church-family fellowship," said Masterton. "The invitation to God's table is for all people, and 100-mile meals are an opportunity to share food and fellowship while finding out more about where our food comes from, and how its journey to our table impacts people and the environment."

The campaign has several parts that suggest ways to "change yourself, change your community, or change the world." Congregations will find "change your community" particu-



larly helpful, which not only offers the 100-mile meal idea, but also features worship materials, instructions on hosting a workshop, tips for taking a carbon Sabbath, and a "Power Down Day" where a group commits to not use fossil fuel-powered electricity for 12 hours.

According to the KAIROS website, "100-mile church dinners and picnics are events that enable congregations

to provoke discussion and awareness. Churches can become leaders in demonstrating that locally grown food is a viable alternative to the global supermarket."

The idea comes from *The 100-Mile Diet*, a book by Alisa Smith and J. B. MacKinnon, two British Columbians who, for one year, only ate foods grown within 100 miles of their home.

Having congregations partici- ➤



pate in something similar helps them realize that "a tremendous amount of fossil fuels is required for large-scale commercial farms, processing and packing facilities, cross-country and international transport, as well as the operation of ever-expanding super-

markets," notes KAIROS. "Consuming locally grown foods requires 17 times less oil and gas than a typical diet, in which each ingredient has traveled an average of 1,500 miles."

"It's seasonal and it's local," said Janette McIntosh, a member of West

Point Grey, Vancouver, and an environmental aficionado. "There is less packaging, less energy required, and less transportation costs and pollution, plus, you can become re-acquainted with what it is exactly that is being produced in a particular season within this local distance."

McIntosh said the first book that got her involved in the eat local initiative is *Pick of the Crop: Seasonal Recipes Inspired by Canada's Public Markets*, by Jennifer Stamper, and noted that many other cook books have now come out that are regionally specific.

The 100-mile project includes numerous suggestions on how to make the meal work, and how to build on the environmental focus in other areas of your church and its work. Ideas for grace and a list of resources are also included. ■

For more information, visit [www.re-energize.org](http://www.re-energize.org), or contact Katharine Masterton in Justice Ministries at [kmasterton@presbyterian.ca](mailto:kmasterton@presbyterian.ca) or 1-800-619-7301 ext. 250.

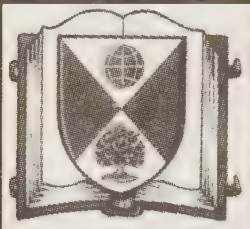
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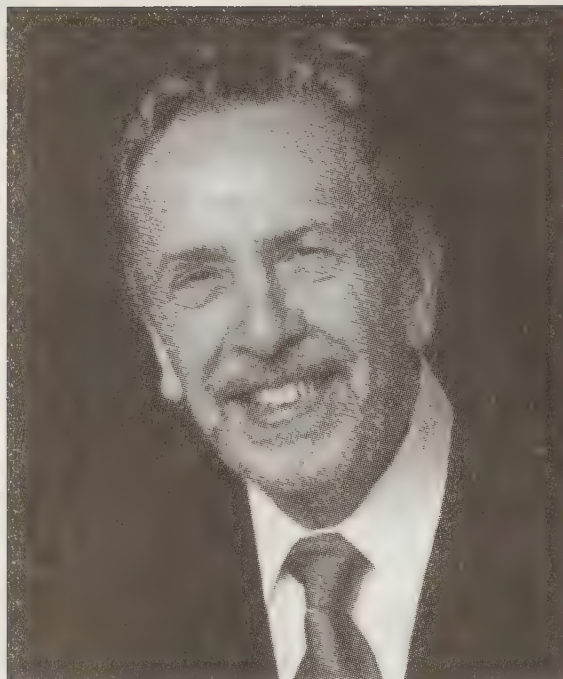
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# Theology of the Cross

Douglas Hall delves deep to seek truth. BY ARTHUR VAN SETERS

When the church seeks to discern its way, people like Walter Bryden and Stanford Reid challenge us to examine our deepest convictions. They prod us to recover something of the creative dynamic of our Reformed heritage. They believe that theology is not only essential but eminently practical.

These are important voices from within our Presbyterian Church. But another Canadian voice invites us to travel even further because of his acute concern about how our theology engages the times in which we live. Douglas John Hall taught theology for more than 30 years, first at St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon, and then at McGill University in Montreal. In the latter institution he had a direct impact on Presbyterian students studying at Presbyterian College. His 2005 publication,

*Bound and Free: A Theologian's Journey*, is a candid reflection on how he has sought, specifically on behalf of the church, to inter-relate Reformed theology and Canadian culture within the larger context of the world. It is a wonderfully accessible exploration, particularly of Luther's theology of the cross, which inspires the church to grapple with the true radicality of the Gospel of Christ.

Hall puts the matter simply. "For the theologian, it is a wonderful and liberating experience to discover just how spiritually vibrant, intellectually serious, and politically engaged ... Christian theological discourse becomes when it is part of the life of a flesh-and-blood congregation." He adds that the more Christianity declines in influence and power, the more we need theology. We have to have deeper reasons for being the church than prestige and social affirmation.

When churches diminish or marginalize the contribution of serious theology, Hall argues, they "become collectivities of a nebulous sort of 'fellowship,' or of random activism, or of indifferent 'spirituality,' or of moralisms old or new, or simply of 'nice' people who don't quite know why they are there but feel they ought to be." Such churches become susceptible to the latest fads and programs promoted by the latest books shaped more by the surrounding culture than by the faith of the church.

He explains the title of his book, *Bound and Free*, by saying that we are bound to a tradition, shaped in so many ways by the past, by our Reformed heritage. Yet we are also free in the present and for the future, for the way we struggle with how the Word of God speaks now with fresh vigour. To become theology, "Christian thought



must have been pierced to the heart by the pathos of the human condition here and now." Theologians must discern the signs of the times and engage these realities for the sake of the church. This, in turn requires theological courage, "the daring to think that one has really heard and understood the Christian message oneself, in all its existential profundity."

Early on, Hall discovered Luther, the 16th-century Reformer who challenged him "to be truthful, to be myself, to accept myself despite all that was truly unacceptable about me. To trust." Luther was not Hall's hero but a very human figure—bombastic, impulsive and deeply honest. Luther helped him to see that "one can be a Christian and a doubter, a skeptic, a questioner of all sorts of pretensions to finality. Perhaps one can be a Christian and also oneself!"

Recollecting the 1960s and 70s, Hall perceived that new voices were being heard in the world and in theology: those of women, African Americans, indigenous people, the economically deprived and exploited, and others. There was a new openness—but with it there seemed to be more folksiness and less reverence, less substance and more performance. He observed that the tremendous wrestling with theology in the first half of the 20th century gradually dissipated before it got into the mainstream of Christian

dialogue in the churches.

But this was also a time when many felt an increasing awareness of the terrible reality of evil, of darkness in the world (war, racial violence, environmental crises, the exercise of raw military power, to name a few). Without entering the darkness of our time more deeply, the churches "will continue to exist largely on the surface of life and history."

So Hall asserts that only by way of the cross can we face and engage the realities of our social, cultural and historical context. Only in this way can hope truly engage our fears, anxieties and lostness. "The theology of the cross is the heart and centre of all theological and ethical thinking."

The way of the cross is utterly foreign to the social and religious ethos of our prevailing Anglo-Saxon culture. Such a theology is one that deals with challenge as a struggle, the clash of opposites, paradox and mystery. It was Luther who grasped so clearly that God is both revealed and concealed. God's glory and power are manifest in weakness and suffering. This is difficult for us because instead of the confidence of faith we want certitude, instead of trust we prefer closure. Absolute certitude leads to fundamentalism, that is, a position of such exactness that those captivated by

it feel "delivered from all the relativities, uncertainties, indefiniteness and transience of human existence"—which, of course, means that they end up denying their own finitude. The alternative is to trust in God who alone is infinite.

As Hall looks at mainstream Protestant churches today he senses that they appear deeply demoralized, tentative and cowed by the growth of non-mainstream churches. As a result, "they are failing to witness to the foundation principles of the Reformation and to distinguish them from Protestant aberrations." Here we need to clarify again what it is that we are bound to, namely an understanding of God's involvement in the world rediscovered by the 16th-century Reformers—Calvin, Luther, Knox and others.

The question, however, is, how are we now to speak of God in such a secular world as ours? "What words can be found to witness to God's ineffable and incarnate Word in an age that is notoriously distrustful of words?" Doing theology ends up being nothing less than a form of spiritual suffering. This finally takes us to the spiritual depths of the theologian's struggle with God since we all fall short of becoming what we are called to be.

Here Hall reminds us that it is not through faith that we are justified but by grace though faith—by the ➤

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gracious act of God in the crucified Christ. Which is to say that in a can-do culture that exalts accomplishment, even faith is not an accomplishment but an avenue of acceptance. This does not absolve us of responsibility nor should we regard our salvation as something pre-determined. Rather, we affirm both God's grace and our own freedom to respond to that grace.

We always live between affirmation and counter-affirmation, given the living realities of our lives and the living reality

of God. Faith is not simple because life is not simple; it is an ongoing struggle—but always with the encouragement and enabling of the Spirit. The quest of faith for understanding belongs not only to those who are ordained but to the whole people of God.

In this quest for understanding the Bible is central for the church. This does not mean, however, a literalistic reading of the Bible. The authority of Scripture "is its capacity to let us hear the living Word that always transcends without

dismissing the written word." Through the letter we listen for the spirit.

We are living increasingly on the sidelines of society. According to Hall, this is not just about declining membership in the church; it is even more about declining influence over society as a whole. But then the prophets of ancient Israel were primarily marginalized and so, certainly, was Jesus in first-century Palestine. Perhaps we are even now as a church being prepared for a prophetic ministry!

Hall ends with a further challenge. Delving deep down into life with all its questions, absurdities and disturbing realities can occur only to those who feel a profound obligation to seek truth, who have an overwhelming sense of vocation. There is a certain drivenness that impels engagement, a drivenness that emanates from the Spirit. Congregations may prefer to be uplifted, but the liberation of the Gospel into newness and hopefulness is by the lowly way of the cross. The pursuit of happiness so dominant in our culture doesn't come anywhere near meeting our real needs—needs which cry out ultimately for meaningfulness that is honest.

I believe, with Douglas Hall, that congregations are actually yearning for theology in the sense that they want to have a deeper sense of what they believe. But what they believe has to engage the real world with transparent truthfulness. Hall has centred our thinking in the cross of the risen Christ and in this volume he has invited us to see this theology as the lens through which to view our lives, our church and our world. In so doing he has opened up a way of genuine discernment. The real challenge, however, is to explicate just how distinctive the cross is in a competitive, often coercive culture in which winning and succeeding is almost always at the expense of someone else (and often at the expense of creation). Genuine hope for the church (and the world) comes through the crucified and risen Christ. ■

*Rev. Dr. Art Van Seters is Professor Emeritus at Knox College, Toronto. This is the second of two articles.*

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# Kenya's Crisis

Presbyterian Rick Allen is frustrated but hopeful. BY EMILY WIERENGA

Dr. Richard Allen is frustrated. "Canadians have the means and opportunity to learn and keep current about the situations of various countries and peoples in the world, but unfortunately they often remain uninformed," says the Sarnia, Ont., native who has been working with the Presbyterian Church in East Africa since 1994. "One would hope that the fairly wide reporting in the media of the present Kenyan crisis will encourage Canadians and others in the future to follow similar world problems more closely."

A medical doctor, Allen is responsible for the HIV/AIDS program outside of Nairobi, in the Kikuyu district. "I am not in personal danger. Expatriates [mission personnel, diplomats and others] from western countries are usually not in direct danger during the type of violent situation now occurring in Kenya." Of course, he stresses, common sense is a necessary weapon to carry when traveling locally or elsewhere in the country.

As little as six months ago Kenya was a seemingly peaceful nation. But tensions have been lurking for years and they exploded, often along ethnic lines, after the December 27 election, when the incumbent, Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner. The vote was very close and the chief opposition leader, Raila Odinga, declared foul. He said a "clique of people around Kibaki" had rigged the results, but that democracy was as unstoppable as the "flow of the Nile."

"A few years prior to my arrival in Kenya," says Allen, "the government abandoned its one-party state and allowed multi-party elections. Since that time

and during my stay in the country there has been increasing freedom of speech and political diversity. In 2002, the party in power since independence in the early 1960s was defeated in a national election and replaced by the opposition. In this present election ... it looked again that the government in power was going to be defeated through the ballot box, but that did not occur and has resulted in the present political crisis."

But it is the world's silence that frustrates Allen. "One wishes that church leaders and members would see that they have a role to play in facilitating and supporting social action that addresses the many injustices and human rights violations in different parts of the world."

He holds up the Presbyterian Church in Canada as an example of faith in action. "The PCC collects funds through Presbyterian World Service and Development. These funds are then made available to a division of the World Council of Churches which facilitates relief activities in Kenya in cooperation with several Kenyan national churches."

Currently these funds are going towards providing food, water and clothing for the 300,000 displaced Kenyans running for their lives.

Despite Kenya's current chaos, Allen, along with the majority of Kenyans, believes this too shall pass. "After this crisis has greatly lessened or come to an end, God will help Kenyans to reflect on



Graffiti on a wall tells a profound story. At press time a power-sharing deal between Kibaki and Odinga was imminent.



Rev. Rick Allen, centre, in Londiani, Kenya, with Rev. Joseph Mothaly, left of him.

what happened and why it happened, with the hope that such horrific events will be avoided from being repeated in the future."

He is hopeful for the future, and believes that through the prayers of churches worldwide and continued financial support, God's vision for Kenya will come to pass. "It's like His vision for all places: His people will strive to live peacefully and will learn to tolerate other ideas, traditions and religions." ■

*Emily Wierenga is a freelance writer.*





# Always Generous

Glenview raises \$200,000 for Evangel Hall. BY MIKE WISE & PETER BROUGHTON PHOTOS BY ANDREW FAIZ

When the Glenview, Toronto, congregation decided to support Evangel Hall's Campaign Dignity in the fall of 2004, there were a few individuals wondering whether the congregation had taken on more of a commitment than it could handle.

Led by Peter Broughton, Glenview's campaign committee chair, the optimists prevailed. The campaign officially wrapped up last fall with Glenview achieving its goal of raising \$200,000, representing about half of the annual givings to the church, to help Evangel Hall and Toronto's homeless.

"The campaign received a tremendous response by the congregation," said Broughton. "It was unprecedented from Glenview's point of view, and other congregations for that matter, to raise that amount for a single local community outreach project."

In recognition of Glenview's commitment to its cause, Evangel Hall named a chapel on its premises in honour of Glenview on February 10.

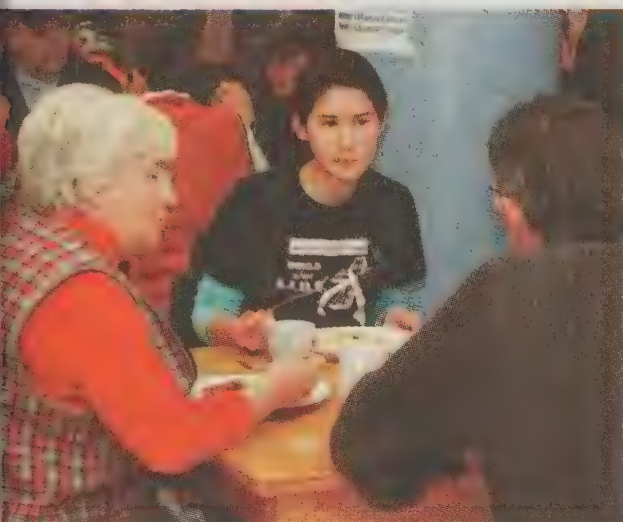
For more than 90 years, Evangel Hall, an inner-city mission of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, has served the homeless, hungry and ill by meeting their material, emotional and spiritual needs. To meet the growing need of Toronto's homeless, a new facility was built to provide 84 new apartments for its residents and expand much needed programming.

Some funding for transitional housing provided by the federal government gave the opportunity for the directors to consider the new building. When the plans were finalized, a \$6-million gap remained between the cost of the building and available financing from governments, the sale of the old premises, and a couple of large grants from a foundation and the East Toronto Presbytery.





*On this page:* Joan Nielson talks to one of the guests. Steve Jackson doles out the chili. Portland Place resident Ron. In the group shot: members of Glenview, Toronto, who made, delivered and served dinner at Evangel Hall. Heather Elliott, April Watt and Steve Jackson enjoy the chilli.



*On facing page:* Pat Brown, Marilyn Broughton and Barb Millichamp prep the chili and the salad; while April Watt serves one of Evangel Hall's dinner guests. Evangel resident Judi and Evangel's communications director Cindy Han share a laugh.



Campaign Dignity was created to eliminate the \$6-million debt incurred by the construction of the new building. The funds were needed to ensure that the expansion and enhancement of programs were the priority versus paying down interest and principal against the construction debt. Churches were asked to raise \$2 million and, it was hoped, \$4 million would come from corporate donations in an extensive fundraising effort.

Glenview members have always been generous in their donations of food, clothing and money which enable the dedicated staff at the Hall to care for some of the city's poorest people. At least once a year, the young people of the church serve Sunday dinners to clients at the Hall, and for many years, members of the congregation have served on the Board of Directors. The many volunteers who had served in many capacities at the old building on Queen Street West were well aware of its challenging inadequacies. It is not surprising then, that Glenview would be solidly behind the campaign to raise money for the new building.

For Broughton and his fellow committee members, John Crocker, Leslie McCallum, Keith McLean, and Barbara Millichamp, the most satisfying aspect of their efforts is knowing that their work and the generosity of the Glenview congregation is helping many desperate men, women and children find a safe refuge, build new lives, and focus on a positive future with hope and dignity.

Glenview knows it has much to be thankful for. While we are proud of our contribution to Evangel Hall, we acknowledge that it was possible only through God's grace. It is especially fitting that it is the chapel at the Hall that has been named to recognize the strong bonds between us. The picture of Glenview Church which now hangs in the EH Chapel and the picture of Evangel Hall which hangs at Glenview will be constant reminders of how much we have to learn from one another as our mutual love continues to flourish. ■

*Mike Wise and Peter Broughton are members of Glenview, Toronto. Broughton led the fundraising campaign.*





# A Good Foundation

St. Andrew's, Riverview, continues. BY SARA JEWELL

They are found on nearly every winding back road in this country, nestled amid hay fields and headstones: the white clapboard country church. With historic downtown churches throwing open their doors and modern churches thriving in the suburbs, the small white country church could be a quaint footnote in the story about church survival—until you meet the members of St. Andrew's, Riverview, Nova Scotia.

"As long as I could remember, church was held at the little school," Donn Mattinson recalls while sitting on the front porch of his farmhouse along the shores of River Phillip in northeastern Nova Scotia. While the congregation formed in 1932, "in

1936, a minister [Rev. E.G. Foote] came in and decided they should build a church. A church for the community of Riverview," the 81-year-old says. He points to his woodlot on the other side of the river. "They cut the logs across the river there and brought them over on the ice. In the spring, they hauled them to the site."

Mattinson's father, Floyd Mattinson, also donated the quarter of an acre just up the road where the church sits. The pews and pulpit came from a church in New Anaan that had just closed and the rest of the materials were donated. They purchased what they had to.

"Money was scarce," remembers Mattinson, who was 14 at the time. "Everyone pitched in. Some

didn't give as much as others for the simple reason they couldn't. Everyone was poor."

What they had were many hands to get the work done. "Community effort built that church," Mattinson says. In the '30s, the farming community of Riverview boasted at least eight large, solid Presbyterian families, including the Mattinsons, the Mackays, the Dixons, the Frasers and the Simpsons. While many of those names are still found on the mailboxes along Route 301, the church now may see only eight people attend Sunday afternoon worship.

Yet Mattinson remains adamant. "It's a church for the community of Riverview and it always will be."



The church's 88-year-old clerk of session still remembers the awe she felt the day the church opened in 1939. "It was a good feeling to know that the building was finished and we could have services there instead of in a schoolhouse," says Dorothy Dixon. "It was really wonderful."

**The church's 88-year-old clerk of session still remembers the awe she felt the day the church opened in 1939**

She is the last remaining Dixon to attend the church; her father-in-law, Philip, was the first Sunday school superintendent. There hasn't been a Sunday school at St. Andrew's in many years. Nor any new members.

"Some of the people in this settlement are not Presbyterians," she points out. "After the war, a lot of our young people married and settled in other places so we don't have any young people. No children. It's sad."

As the smallest of a three-point pastoral charge (along with Springhill and Oxford), St. Andrew's meets only every other Sunday afternoon. With Oxford less than 15 minutes down the road, why not amalgamate?

"The people in Riverview that go to this church wouldn't go every Sunday or even every second Sunday to Oxford," Mattinson states. "For the simple reason, they wouldn't. But they're more apt to go to the local church." His own resistance has a deep personal source. "I was born here and I'm gonna die here and I'm gonna go to church here." The emotion in his voice is unmistakable. For this former farmer and trucker, this church—and the routines of maintaining it and opening it up every other Sunday—must provide him with as much reassurance as the house he has shared with his wife for 59 years.

Dixon remembers her mother-in-law declaring that "as long as she was living, this little church would never close. She looked on it as a Mattinson church and she fought tooth and nail with Pictou Presbytery over different things to keep this church open." More than 30 years after the death of Margaret Mattinson, St. Andrew's remains open; better than ever, one could add. A generous bequest plus a few bake sales allowed the congregation to add a finished basement under the church in 1995.

"All we had was a stone foundation," Mattinson explains, "and it's ➤

Claude Casey and Donn Mattinson keep the grounds well tended.



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St. Andrew's, Riverview, today, left; and a community effort while being built, right.

pretty hard to hold a building in any condition over the years unless you have a good foundation. The money was there and we decided to do it. It's there forever."

The attachment to this building goes beyond donations of timber and front steps and tablecloths. "It's the best example of the 'church family,'" Rev. Elizabeth Davies says of her congregation at St. Andrew's. "It's a family in a very real sense. They know each other so well. They have absolute trust in each other."

Davies, who is retired, has been at

this pastoral charge since 2004. Her impression of this congregation is that "they are steadfast and confident in their faith." Yet when asked if there is any future for this church, she answers, "I don't know. If you just look at the ages and the mobility, I don't know what will happen. But I'm catching the feeling that as long as they can keep the doors open, they will."

If the youngest members of this congregation are nearing 60, what will sustain the church? "Faith is what built this church," Dorothy Dixon says. "It was our faith that started it and our

faith that kept it going."

The substantial donations of time, money and materials haven't hurt either. As his 82nd birthday loomed, Donn Mattinson admitted that his hope for the future of his church is growth. "For more people to move in and go to church. For it to stay open."

Is that realistic? There is a small hesitation before he answers. "Yep." But his voice is quieter, lacking confidence. "Can't see why not." He believes, after all, that the small white church built by the edge of the woods rests on a good foundation. ■

*Sara Jewell is a freelance writer.*

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# Knees Shake, Voices Break

Authentic testimony is being preached to us.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

*Matthew 28:1-8 (9-20)*  
*Easter Day, March 23, 2008*

It's what makes teaching preaching worthwhile. The quietest student in class gets up to preach. Grips the pulpit for dear life. Knees shake. Voice breaks. Then we're blessed by a true gospel sermon filled with authentic testimony.

As Luke tells it, Peter turns out to be everything his teacher hoped he would be. But Jesus isn't there to hear and evaluate Peter's debut sermon. Neither is Luke. In his day, speeches aren't recorded verbatim. They live on in the memories of those who hear them. Luke relies on such memories. Luke tells the story of the church's beginnings. Peter is the hero of at least the first episodes. When he stands up to speak, his message represents the church's testimony.

Anna Carter Florence, a professor of preaching at Columbia Theological Seminary, Georgia, defines testimony as telling what you've seen and saying what you believe about it. Peter and his friends have seen and heard Jesus close up. Others around them may not have seen Jesus in person, but they see him in people like Peter. By the time Luke writes, another generation has received the first testimony and shaped it into their own.

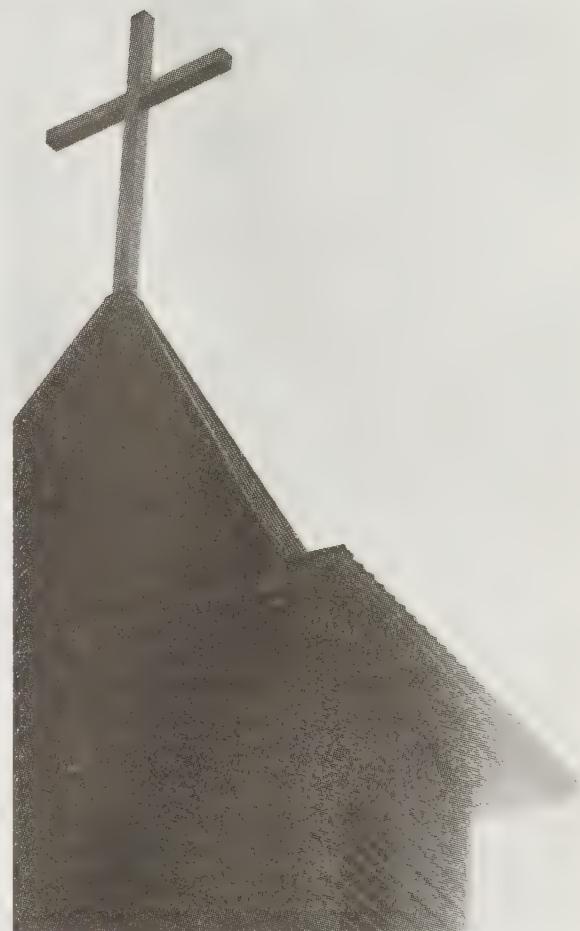
Luke's account of Peter's testimony on Pentecost day presents a Jewish witness, testifying to Jews. The first testimony to Jesus has to be grounded in Hebrew Scripture. Peter's sermon may look to us like bad exegesis. In his

day, biblical interpretation is a much more creative process.

The reading for today includes troubling words: "...this Jesus, whom you crucified." These words of Christian Scripture and others (v. 23 for example) have been used to justify anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism for centuries. But the apostles don't begin by blaming all their fellow Jews and their descendants for Jesus' death. They see in Jesus a fresh understanding of covenant, extended to embrace more people than they have ever dared imagine. Verse 39 is their invitation to take hold of an old promise for a new age.

The Lectionary offers the first words of verse 14. Read the whole verse. Peter calls on "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem." Peter speaks to those who should know what the unholy Romans did to Jesus in the Holy City. Peter indicts the city that should have welcomed Jesus with open gates. Not every Jew. Not every Judean. But people who could, by a slight stretch of imagination, be called complicit in something much bigger than themselves.

This is more than a westerner blaming Ottawa for everything and the weather. Or an easterner calling Toronto "sin city." But remember how many of Jesus' first followers are Galilean. How many are poor. Judea isn't their home.



Prosperous, powerful Jerusalem is more symbol than location. Jesus raged at the corruption of Jerusalem and wept over its spiritual poverty. Jesus, says Luke, had to go to the city (Luke 9:51). It was his hope and destiny. Only there could the event that would usher in the Kingdom take place. The Jerusalem of the Gospels and Acts is more symbol than location.

You of this corrupt generation, says Peter, wouldn't, couldn't see God at work in your midst. Fear not. "For the promise is for you, your children, and all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls." ►



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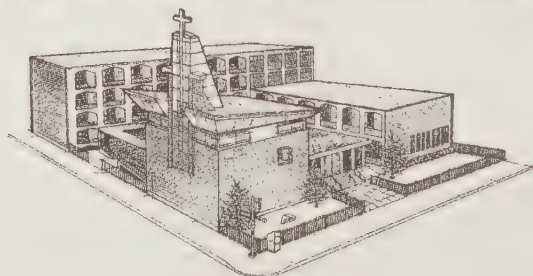
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(v.39) About 3,000 people re-claim the promise that day, says Luke. What can top that? Wait for next week's reading!

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*Rev. Laurence DeWolfe lives in Halifax.*

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# Saint Bernard

There's a huge journey from talking about Christianity and doing it. BY PHIL CALLAWAY

Jeff is our youngest child, a big tough stylish kid, handsome and strong, the teenager all the little kids love and the kind girls phone to discuss math problems with (or at least that's what they tell us when they finally get past our customer service department). His laugh was enough to bring the house down when he was a boy, but that contagious laugh began to vanish by the time he turned 12 and was completely extinct by his 13th birthday. It's a horrible thing to watch someone view life wearing the glasses of a teenager, trading in joy because it isn't so cool.

Our kids have always laughed a lot, partly because they got their sense of humour from my wife's side of the family, whose motto is this: "It's all funny until someone gets hurt. Then it's hilarious!"

To complicate things, the boy was struggling in school. He was late on assignments as often as the commercial flights I take. A teacher called to tell me that if he could issue marks below zero, he would give them to my son. Imagine telling your friends you have a minus 23 in Chemistry. Not an F, but an H.

I received a welcome phone call in the midst of all of this. It was Compassion, the international child development agency, asking us to go to the Dominican Republic on a short mission trip. I prayed about it for one-third of a nanosecond, then eagerly said yes. I would run away from home. And take Jeff along.

That night I waved the plane ticket in front of Jeff like a carrot. "Smarten up, listen up, and catch up on assign-



ments or I'll give this to a complete stranger, maybe even the next girl who calls." He smiled ever so slightly. "I will," he promised.

We were met at the airport in the Dominican Republic by Pastor Bernard, who has a glow about him like he works at a nuclear power plant. Bernard doesn't say a lot, which is one of the first signs of sainthood. He speaks three languages fluently, but he'd rather listen to you. Jeff latched onto him during those 10 days. He listened to Bernard's stories of God at work. He watched Bernard tell others of Jesus. Of his death and resurrection. Of the hope He gives. Of the joy He brings.

We stood in a village devastated by a hurricane, but Bernard's face was beaming. "They want me to tell you that their houses are gone but it's okay. The church is still standing." The crowd smiled and nodded. Jeff kicked at a rock and shook his head. We saw children who subsist on food they've scrounged from the dump, kids with

hollow eyes and bloated bellies. When we said good-bye, it was amid tears and ample hugs. If you were to ask me about the happiest moment of fatherhood, I might mention the Friday soon after we returned. Jeff's marks were up a little, hovering near the passing mark. And the laughter was back. Along about midnight I smelled something, so I crept to the kitchen to see what it was.

The boy had cracked half a dozen eggs into a bowl, covered them with a pound of shredded cheese, and thrown an entire package of Canadian bacon into a sizzling frying pan. "Dad," he said, "I'd like to sponsor a kid in the D.R. It's 35 bucks a month, right?"

I tried not to let him see my tears, then decided it didn't matter. I'd just watched my son go from talking about Christianity to doing it. From following those who follow Jesus, to following Jesus for himself.

Hope catches us a little by surprise. ■

Visit Phil online at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com)

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# Talking Memorials

The deeds of God speak powerfully in the lives of His people. BY DAVID WEBBER

I am not sure if it was all the unresolved pastoral concerns we were leaving behind, or if we were all burned out from months of preparation, or if it was some kind of spiritual premonition. But whatever it was, on the morning that we left for our two-week Ontario deputation tour and cross-Canada voyage last April, we were all in tears.

Neither Linda, Chelsea, nor I wanted to leave the morning of April 27. We all felt terribly vulnerable. In much trepidation, we packed the last of the stuff for the trip on the morning of our departure. I was checking the house for any last bits of musical equipment that we might need and I passed by Chelsea's piano. Somehow I knocked an item off the top of the piano and it

fell behind. I crawled up on the piano, wedged my head up against the wall and tried to peer between the piano and the wall to see what it was that I had knocked off. Wedged between the piano and the wall was Great Grandpa Charlie's little old Haida basket. One of his parishioners had given it to him about a hundred years ago when he was a missionary amongst these coastal people. Knowing if I left it there I might well forget where it was when I got back from our journey, I went through considerable antics to retrieve it. That being done, I placed it back in its place on the piano top and turned to get back to my sorrowful and reluctant packing.

Something stopped me dead and seemed to say: "Go back to the little basket." Not being one who is particu-

larly prone to spiritual nudges, it was strange and out of character for me to comply. But I did, and stared at the little basket.

It was like an inner voice said, "See?" And I did, almost instantly, See. I began to giggle. Linda and Chelsea came from where they were doing their last-minute preparations and stared at me.

"What's wrong with you?" Linda said. "Get on with it, man. We've got to get on the road."

"Right," I chortled, "I'll tell you as we drive." About an hour later, after some prayers and tears, we started down the road. As we drove, I said: "So, do you want to hear what had me giggling back there?"

"Do we have a choice?" Linda said,



her eyes still blinking back tears.

"Probably not," I said. I proceeded to tell how I had knocked off Great Grandpa Charlie's Haida basket from the top of the piano, and how after I retrieved it, it seemed to communicate something to me. I told how I stood there gawking at the basket remembering how God had led my great-grandparents to leave their safe homes in merry old England and drag their family to live as missionaries at Cape Scott on the most northern tip of Vancouver Island amongst a few Scandinavians and a whole mess of cougars (this time I didn't tease Linda, who is Norwegian, about the cougars being the friendly residents). I told how I realized how God had been with Charlie and Agnes through it all, most notably Charlie's frequent mission trips up and down the treacherous coast of B.C., which included one sinking off Haida-Quay and a thousand near misses as he ministered amongst the isolated coastal communities, including the Haida people where the basket had come from. I told how it came to me, clear as a bell, clear as spoken word, as I stared at the little basket, that God was saying to me, "David, if I could handle all of that journeying for Charles and Agnes in the days of horse and sail, I quite possibly can handle your little trip across Canada in your day of high-tech diesel pickups and fancy travel trailers. Get over it, get on with it, I am with you."

God speaking to my trepid little heart as I stared at that Haida basket not only encouraged my faith greatly, but the way it did made me giggle. I felt my story so connected to the likes of Joshua and numerous others in the biblical story. Over and over again, God calls people to take some simple thing and set it apart as a memorial. For Joshua, it is stones from the middle of the Jordan River (Josh. 4:22ff). For others it's an altar perhaps, or broken bread and poured-out wine. The point is not in the memorial itself, but that the memorial would cause the deeds of God to come to life again on the lips of His people. The memorial was about telling. And so spoken, these deeds of God, with and on behalf of his people of the past, would

speak powerfully into the lives of his current children to give them courage and hope and faith to go on.

And so we went on, all the way to Ontario and then to the Maritimes. My best friend Jim died suddenly and unexpectedly while we were away on our trip. We found out about it via cell phone. The shock of Jim's death was devastating, but to find out about it in the middle of Montreal traffic, a city I had never been in before, whilst dragging a 26-foot travel trailer, dealing with traffic signs in a language I don't speak and drivers who like to signal with both hands; well, it defies description. But what defies description more than anything else was that in all the years of our friendship, one in which we talked at least two or three times a week, I had never taken the time to clearly tell Jim about God and me; about what God was doing with me and for me and through me. Yes, he knew I was a Christian, of course he knew that. And he even knew quite well what I believed as a Christian, the theology and doctrine of it all. But I never really and clearly told him why I believed, what Christ had done and was doing in my life. For some reason this personal telling seemed too difficult for me. The occasion just never seemed right.

And you know, it would have made such a difference at so many levels to tell that story. I wonder now if a few stones or a basket or something would have helped? Some kind of talking memorial thing that would have caused Jim to say, "Dave, what do these stones mean?" Something that would have given me the occasion and reminder to say, "Jim, do you want to know what these stones mean?" I am sure it would have been the catalyst for telling the story about God and me, a kind of talking memorial. It would have meant the world to me to tell that story. I am pretty sure that it would have meant the world to Jim too. ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry. His books include Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.*



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after graduating from Knox College. Robert and his wife Sheila served in Flin Flon, Man., Brandon, Man., Nanaimo, B.C., Toronto, Ont., Hamilton, Ont., and Milverton, Ont. He retired to Stratford, where he attended Knox Presbyterian Church.

Robert was the son of the late Stephen and Edythe (Browne) Cochrane and his late step-mother Marion (MacLennan) Cochrane. He was the beloved husband of Sheila (Smith) Cochrane, whom he married on April 5, 1958. As was said in his eulogy: "Life was not easy for Bob—his health was a roller coaster but his faith was always a source of strength for him. And God gave him a life partner who stood by him through thick and thin." Loving father of Maureen and husband John Hengeveld of Stratford, Ont., and Judy and husband Shawn Denstedt of Calgary, Alta. Sadly missed by grandchildren Jeremy, Stacey, Katelyn, Emily and Sam. Dear brother of John and wife Joan Cochrane of Vernon, B.C., and Kathleen and husband Reynold Robertson of Saskatoon, Sask.; also missed by sister-in-law Margaret Darbyson of Vernon, B.C. Robert was predeceased by his brother-in-law James Foster Smith.

**GORHAM**, Rev. Dr. Nora Agnes, on Oct. 17, 2007. Nora was born in Edinburgh and graduated from St. Andrew's University with a Bachelor of Science degree. In 1948, she and her husband John Gorham migrated to Toronto where she taught for a number of years while her four children were in school. During the 1970s, she enrolled at Knox College and after graduation accepted first a two-year mission appointment and then a call to Patterson Presbyterian Church, where she faithfully served from 1980 until 2000. The latter years of that ministry were a joint ministry with Rev. Kenrick Keshwah. Following her retirement in 2000, Nora became a minister-in-association at Patterson Church. Nora remained active and involved until her death. Her faithfulness to Christ and her calling to serve were apparent to all who met her.

**JOHNSTON**, Rev. John Alexander, M.A., Th.M., Ph.D., D.D., beloved husband of Heather; dear brother of Mary of Waterloo, Ont.; loving father of Andrew (Beatrice) of Ottawa, Ont., Ian (Kelly) of Bedford, N.S., and Mary (Ian Winter) of Ottawa, Ont.; and grandfather to eight grandchildren.

## Obituaries

**COCHRANE**, Reverend Robert Browne, born March 13, 1931, in Rosetown, Sask., and died Dec. 2, 2007, in Stratford, Ont. Robert was a minister in the Presbyterian Church for 50 years and served his faith and his church with love and care in many areas of Canada



As a result of major injuries sustained in an automobile accident, he died in Hamilton, Ont., on Jan. 10, 2008, in his 81st year.

Founding minister of St. Giles Presbyterian Church, Prince George, B.C., St. Timothy's Presbyterian Church, Ottawa, Ont., and Lagos Presbyterian Church, Nigeria. For 27 years, he was minister of historic MacNab Street Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ont., and for the last eight years, interim minister of Alberton Presbyterian Church. He was Curator of the National Presbyterian Museum, Toronto, and long-time convenor of the General Assembly's committee on history and archives and the Canada-China program of the Canadian Council of Churches. His service in the church also included national committees of Christian education, world mission, church growth, the E. H. Johnson Trust, and Crieff Hills. His service beyond the church included the long-time presidency of the Leprosy Mission Canada and the Ecumenical Study Commission on Public Education in Ontario; trustee of the Hamilton-Wentworth Public School Board; and member of the mayor's race relations committee and the Historical Board of Hamilton. "Carried by Grace."

**MACDONALD**, Reverend Dr. R. Douglas, C.D., B.A., D.D., devoted servant of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, died in Owen Sound, Ont., on Nov. 17, 2007, in his 94th year. Dr. MacDonald was a son of the manse, the eldest of four children to Rev. Dr. and Mrs. C. H. MacDonald and brother of Peggy (deceased), Marion and Helen. In 1940, he married Laura M. Wilkin and they had four children: Mary Ellen (Michael Pauly), Rory (Eva Jean), Greta (Steven Gottlieb) and Angus (Carol); eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

From 1940-1942, he served in Alma Street, St. Thomas and Tempo churches; from 1942-1946 in the Canadian Armed Forces (infantry and chaplaincy) in Canada and overseas and later during the occupation in Germany; from 1946-1969 in St. Andrew's Tillsonburg, Ont., and St. Andrew's Windham Centre, Ont.; and from 1972-1980 in Tolmie Presbyterian Church Port Elgin, Ont., and Knox Presbyterian Church Burgoyne, Ont. He was active on church committees and in the life of the towns where he lived and served from the time of his ordination as a

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Minister of the Word and Sacraments. He was awarded the Canadian Decoration in 1967 and Knox College conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1977.

Since his retirement from the active ministry in 1980, he and his wife Laura lived at Bruce Beach near Kincardine, Ont. He last preached the gospel at the Bruce Beach Open Air Church in August 2007.

**TAYLOR**, Rev. Roy, retired Presbyterian Church minister and WWII veteran died

in Bowmanville, Ont., on Dec. 13, 2007. Roy, beloved husband of Dorothy Kathleen, was the father of Victoria, Gordon, Allen, Barry and the late Leslie Ann. Roy is lovingly remembered by six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Roy graduated from Knox College after a career in the Canadian Forces. He served in Roslin, Fuller and Roxborough, the charge of Stirling and West Huntingdon, the congregations of Knox, Sudbury and the charge of Paisley and Glammis. ■



# New Beginnings

Healing and reconciliation is a long-term process.

BY REV. DR. J. H. HANS KOUWENBERG



I am writing this column before I participate in a national aboriginal and church leaders tour to highlight the need for healing and reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. From March 1-10 we are scheduled to visit Ottawa, Saskatoon, Winnipeg and Vancouver. (There will be extensive coverage of the tour in next month's *Record*.)

The following passage is taken from Philip Yancey's *Rumours of Another World*, and is just one example of the "amazing grace" Yancey discovered as he heard stories about the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which was established in South Africa in 1995 after the election of a democratic government and the abolishment of apartheid which had pitted white people against black people. The commission was established to give black people an opportunity to speak out, in a quasi-legal forum, about the terrible atrocities that had been committed against them and to give white peoples an opportunity to listen to their concerns and, when appropriate, to confess their own complicity in the process.

*The courtroom grew hushed as the elderly woman who had lost first her son and then her husband was given a chance to respond. "What do you want from [this policeman]?" the judge asked.*

*She said she wanted [him] to go to the place where they burned her husband's body and gather up the dust so she could give him a decent burial. His head down, the policeman nodded agreement. Then she added a further request, "[He] took all my family away from me, and I still have a lot of love to give. Twice a month, I would like for him to come to the ghetto and spend a day with me so I can be a mother to him. And I would like [him] to know that he is forgiven by God, and that I forgive him too. I would like to embrace him so that he can know my forgiveness is real.*

Most western systems of legal justice would have punished the policeman for what he had done. But, surprisingly and wonderfully, forgiveness was extended. "Restorative justice," so familiar to our Aboriginal friends, which can take place in a "healing circle" was offered. And thus, the possibility of new paths of reconciliation and healing beckoned.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is delighted that the federal government has made a commitment in the last throne speech to apologize to Aboriginal people for the sad legacy of residential schools. We are on record as affirming the benefits of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which will be established by the Government of Canada to allow former students of residential schools to share their experiences in a safe and culturally appropriate manner. We believe this will contribute to many opportunities for all people of good will to walk in new paths of reconciliation and healing as we seek to develop a more fair and lasting resolution of the infamous legacy of these schools.

Based on the experience and report

of those who worked on the successful South African commission, we believe the work of this Commission will contribute to the Grace that can come to those who are in a place of vulnerability and openness. We believe this forum will allow the First Nation, Inuit and Métis people an opportunity for the Grace of "telling the truth, in love." We believe it will provide an opportunity for many of us to exercise the Grace of listening to other people's real abuse, suffering and pain. Further, it will provide opportunity, once again, for the churches to acknowledge their past shortcomings and failures. We believe it will also provide opportunities for possible forgiveness to be graciously offered, once again, by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people and for new beginnings in our mutual walk towards greater healing and reconciliation.


We are committed to the pursuit of long-term right relationships with Aboriginal people. We want to help our church members and other Canadians understand that reconciliation is a long-term process of relationship-building, needing as many peoples' involvement as possible. And, then, as this is only a beginning, we realize that the issues in building a better relationship will extend well beyond the legacy of the residential schools.

Heartily, in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. H. Kouwenberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Dr. J. H. (Hans) Kouwenberg  
Moderator of the 133rd General Assembly  
The Presbyterian Church in Canada



A photograph of Rev. Derek Macleod, a man with glasses and a clerical collar, listening intently to a dinner guest. The guest is wearing a green and white patterned sweater. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people at the table.

Rev. Derek Macleod listens to  
a dinner guest at Evangel Hall  
in February.

When thou makest a feast,  
call the poor, the maimed,  
the lame, the blind:  
And thou shalt be blessed;  
for they cannot recompense thee:  
for thou shalt be recompensed  
at the resurrection of the just.  
Luke 14:14-15





*Arlene Onuoha, Nigeria*

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*As the Father sent me,*  
*so I send you.*

*John 20:21-23*



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# PRESBYTERIAN Record

May 2008

## Audacious Hope



A report on the Aboriginal and Church leaders' tour



## CALL TO WORSHIP



Who is this that appears like the dawn, fair as the moon,  
bright as the sun, majestic as the stars in procession?

Song of Songs 6: 10



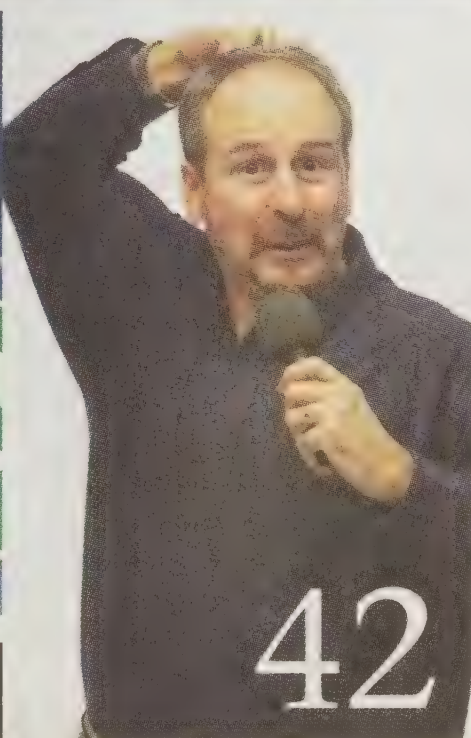


# Audacious Hope

A report on the Aboriginal and Church leaders' tour



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photography by Benjamin Goode



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# CIVILIZED AND ASSIMILATED

Natives are denied power and wealth. BY DAVID HARRIS

The timing was surreal. Remembering the Children: An Aboriginal and Church Leaders' Tour to Prepare for Truth and Reconciliation concluded mid-March. A week later, Ontario judge Patrick Smith sentenced six leaders from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (Big Trout Lake First Nation) in Northern Ontario to six-months' jail for contempt of court. Their crime? Failure to abide by a court-ordered injunction aimed at preventing them from peacefully protesting against mining exploration on their traditional lands.

At stake? Possibly one of the largest platinum deposits on the continent as well as uranium deposits.

One of Bill Clinton's first presidential campaign planks was "the economy, stupid." If only.

The roots of the word economy in Greek are household (*oikos*) and law or plan (*nomos*). The economy should, then, refer to the ordering of the entire fiscal well-being of a country and all its inhabitants. Not just investors in mining companies. Not just governments seeking royalties to fatten our coffers.

So why are the aboriginal people of Canada still forced to go to jail to defend their right to negotiate over land that was theirs—as is now acknowledged in Canadian law—before Europeans arrived?

Even the treaties that are so frequently violated reveal their primary purpose was to wrest the land from the various tribes so that the federal and provincial governments and resource companies could become rich.

As a 1905 agreement between the federal government and Ontario notes: "No site suitable for the development of water-power exceeding 500 horse-power shall be included within the boundaries of any reserve." This is reinforced in Treaty 9: "No valuable water-powers are included within the allotments."

Power and wealth is not for natives.

Witness also the opening of Treaty 9—which, incidentally, includes Big Trout Lake.

"[T]he said Indians have been notified and informed by His Majesty's said commission that it is His desire to open for settlement, immigration, trade, travel, mining, lumbering, and such other purposes as to His Majesty may seem meet, a tract of country ....



[And] His Indian people may know and be assured of what allowances they are to count upon and receive from His Majesty's bounty and benevolence."

That bounty and benevolence must have been hard to resist, offered as it was by a commissioner from the Department of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott, who's most famous statement was: "I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think ... that the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone ... Our

object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question and no Indian Department."

Even if Duncan Scott meant it less pejoratively than it reads now, he was still articulating the received wisdom that the native population needed to be "civilized," then assimilated, as the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857 envisioned.

It's curious how we are indignant regarding Communist indoctrination in China and the subjugation of other tribal groups there to the Han majority, while the collective Canadian reaction to the forced indoctrination through church-run residential schools generate but a blip.

Canadians are all too quick to note that some—maybe even many—residential schools teachers were good and kind and that learning English and other disciplines was a good education. China and the former Soviets might respond the same. After all, some principles of Communism (communal sharing) are Christian in origin.

On top of this was the horrific abuse so many children endured at the hands of often violent predators who exploited weaknesses in supervision in the schools to feed their voracious dysfunctional appetites.

To what extent the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is able to address these issues remains to be seen. So far, it has hardly galvanized the country.

As for the Clinton dictum about the economy, at least when it comes to native issues, that's not been the case.

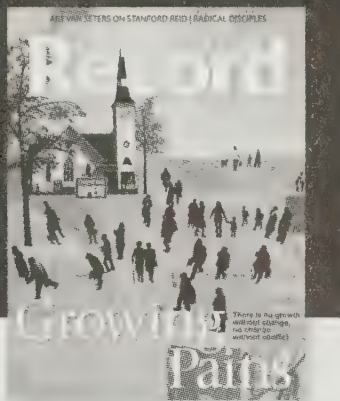
Put crassly: It's "the greed, stupid." ■

David Harris



# Letters

letters@presbyterianrecord.ca



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## Maybe like BoP 348

I have just arrived home from church. The sermon was great, the celebration of the sacrament was reverent and pertinent ... but I miss the old hymns that were always a joy when I was singing in the choir and being inspired by the energy that evolves from the transformation of spirit into word and notes. This is what we miss in the current service that mandates this new kind of music. I think it is time to reintroduce the old hymns that inspired and raised the spirits and rafters. We want to go to church to be spiritually uplifted, not to feel that we have just attended a funeral wake.

JIM NELSON, OWEN SOUND, ONT.

## Share the Blame

*Re Living in a Gardasil World, February*

While I do not agree with Rev. DeVries regarding the value of the human papilloma virus vaccination, I respect many of the arguments he makes. Towards the end of the article, however, he writes of "lead[ing] our daughters." When one gender bears the brunt of the blame for the consequences of mutual actions, no one is spared. Were we to place responsibility solely on young men, we would undermine the intelligence, independence and respect young women deserve by denying their ability to make informed choices. Likewise, when we hold only young women accountable for sexual consequences or the prevention thereof, we both shame our young women and deny our young men the opportunity to be responsible, fully dignified and independent young men. To do so is an injustice to both our daughters and our sons, and it is

easily prevented through appropriate and even-handed treatment.

DARLENE MCLEOD, OTTAWA

## A Real Story

*Re Never, Ever Alone, January*

Thank you for this wonderful story about a 'real' person out in the 'real' world finding his 'real' life in the presence of our 'really' amazing God. May he always find God's 'real' blessings.

MARJORIE MACLEOD, BURNABY, B.C.

## Masks of God

*Re Core Beliefs, March*

It is generally true that when people refer to myth, they are referring to fantastic tales in ancient times, or a-once-upon-a-time-land, but this conception of myth must give way to the earnest study of myth by people like Joseph Campbell who endeavour to penetrate the meaning of myth and what lies behind it.

C.S. Lewis speaks of truth at an unconscious level, at a place not in history but in our mind. Christianity is a mask of God; metaphors through which we wish to grasp reality; stories of humanity's struggles to explain itself in an unknown cosmos. I do not believe them to be illusions but we must place the correct interpretation on them for the conclusions to which they point.

Science is too young, it has much to learn. It is like an impetuous and precocious child that makes pronouncements on the nature of reality; it is a wonderful instrument for discovery of the truth but still in its infancy.

Christianity stands, as always, at a crossroads, caught between literalism and metaphor, unable as yet to make

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## Pontius' Puddle



the transition between them. The significance of Jesus in history will eventually be replaced by an explanation of what he really means; to see him as an agency for understanding God.

Knowledge and faith, both proclaim, "Christ is Risen."

DENNIS SUTHERLAND, VICTORIA

### A Change of Kind

*Re Growing Pains, March*

I have a deep appreciation for the work that J.P. Smit has done in our synod and our congregation. His call to faithfulness has helped our congregation change in very positive ways.

I wonder, however, if we are too focused on building the Titanic rather than dreaming of the airplane. The Titanic and its ilk were simply changes of degree over older boats. They went faster, farther and carried more but they were still just boats going from point A to point B. Airplanes are an entirely new way of going from A to B. Besides birds, there were no clear precedents for the airplane. They were a change of kind, a much harder change than a change of degree. It is not quite hyperbole to say that airplanes transformed transportation not just changed it.

We follow a God of transformation. Should we settle for change? Should we settle for simply improving what has worked in the past or should we as a denomination encourage dreamers in our midst to launch into new ways of doing church? Smit challenges us to change but maybe he settles for

change because many of us are scared of transformation. We simply want a slightly improved version of ourselves, not the radical new life promised by God through Jesus. I for one am not willing to settle for the Titanic. I want to fly. I hope others are with me.

REV. BLAIR BERTRAND, BRAMPTON

### WMS for TRC

It is important that representatives of the WMS be our principal spokespersons for the upcoming Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Throughout the history of the residential schools Presbyterian schools were under the administration of the WMS. In this the Society worked closely with the Board of Missions and aboriginal work was shared by the two agencies, but the schools were the special province of the WMS.

In recent years, when the controversy over the schools erupted, the church as a whole has willingly acknowledged responsibility and negotiations and legal challenges have been handled by the General Assembly and its officers. In this all Presbyterians have shared in the consequences of this affair. Nevertheless it is the WMS which ran the schools and it is the WMS which should be at the table when truth and reconciliation are being sought. Among those representing the WMS should be ordinary officers and members of the Society and not just paid staff.

I would hope that those representing the church are thoroughly briefed on the history of Presbyterian work among aboriginal Canadians. What were the agreements entered into by the church with the Federal Government and with aboriginal bands? Did we endorse government policy? Who made these agreements and who authorized them? How were our agreements with aboriginal bands carried out? Note should be made of those who worked among First Nations people. Wonderful, dedicated people gave their lives to this service and the current press gives them no credit. While acknowledging errors we must not share in dishonouring fine teachers and the students who learned from them.

I have written to the Atlantic Mission Society and the Assembly Council. We should do whatever we can to assist in reconciliation and the truth should be told, the good news as well as the bad. My prayers are with those who undertake this task and with the Commission when it is constituted.

REV. IAN S. WISHART, ST. JOHN'S, NFLD.

### A serious issue

*Re Baptism of Jesus, January*

Like Genevieve Whyte, I am astounded and shocked. Rev. Laurence DeWolfe tells us quite dogmatically that the first Christology was adoptionist. What about Paul (writing prior to the Gospels) in Philippians 2 and 2 Corinthians 8? DeWolfe informs us that the Gospels are hopelessly full of contradictions and that "Different New Testaments



ment communities had different ideas about where Jesus came from and what that meant." Many students of the Bible, however, will feel that the differences should not be exaggerated and that there is a marvelous unity in the New Testament portrait of our Lord.

DeWolfe wants us to "look beyond" the Church's confession and see that there was a time when Jesus "began to be God's Son." This sounds like adoptionism to me and I wonder how anyone who holds such a view can remain a minister of a church in which he is required to sign a statement that he is in essential agreement with the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Many have been exercised of late about the drift toward the acceptance of homosexuality in the church, but this issue is far more serious. This is the core of our faith—was Jesus a man who became the Son of God and somehow reveals who God is, or was he always the Son, born of the Virgin Mary, our crucified Saviour and exalted Lord? The church has always affirmed the latter. Is it now acceptable in the Presbyterian Church in Canada to maintain the former?

JOHN VAUDRY, MONTREAL

## Geopolitics gone mad!

*Re Reformed bodies unite, February*

Last line, Paragraph One. There must be a lot of countries I never heard of in school in the 40's-50's since this article now states there are a "100 million

countries" in the world.

I know—just the word "million" was added by gremlins. Just want you to know that your articles are well read.

A long time reader of the *Presbyterian Record*,

H. JENKINS, TORONTO

*Editor responds: Thank you for reading, H. The break-up of the U.S.S.R. has changed the map but the "gremlin" certainly overstated the case.*

## Corrections:

St. Andrew's, Wingham, Ont., is gracious enough to not be "miffed" by the *Record's* mix-up in the Dec. '07 and Jan. '08 People and Places section. Still, their "kindly nudge" warrants a correction: The December photo reversed the names of Rev. Dr. Jim Czegledi and Rev. Bernie Skelding, and the January picture proves that the P&P editor still hasn't learned his directions. Merle and Janet are on Gordon's right, and Betty and Jo are to his left. We're sending the editor back to Grade 1 to get it straight. We apologize for the error.

And, on the same theme: We apologize to the saints at the Evergreen Centre for Street Youth (February) for mixing up their names: It should be Jamal on page 20; Reji on page 21; and, Pac on page 22.

*Re Always Generous, March*

Judi, who is seen in a photograph with Cindy Han, is not an Evangel Hall resident. She lives at Portland Place, which, as promised last month, will be featured in a future issue. ■

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## Volunteers Needed for Summer Sunday Dinners

This summer Evangel Hall Mission needs your help. Our Sunday dinner program has been so popular that we are going to continue this program throughout the summer.

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The meal does not have to be complicated and if cooking is not your forte, we have two large barbeques available for hot dogs and hamburgers. Meals can be prepared in the comfort of your own kitchen or here at the Hall, whichever is more convenient for you.

Evangel Hall Mission represents extended family for many of our participants. The dinner program is not only an opportunity to provide nutritious meals for less-fortunate members of our community but also a chance to let others know that they are appreciated and cared for.

For more information on this program or to have your group host a Sunday dinner, please contact Paula Aceto (416) 504-3563 x 231

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Because anybody can serve...  
You only need a heart full of grace.  
A soul generated by love.  
~ Martin Luther King, Jr.*

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# People & Places

For more People & Places submissions, please visit our website:  
[www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)



Those who have, help those who are struggling: Habitat Interlude, in Kapuskasing, Ont., is a shelter for women 16 years of age and older who are experiencing a crisis situation, which may include physical abuse. These women from the Ladies' Group at St. John's, Kapuskasing, have collected personal items that the Habitat women may need once they leave the shelter program. *From left:* Kay Stevenson, Ruth Sherwin, Betty Johnson, Anne Jamieson, Nan Hassell, Brigitte Stenabaugh (Habitat Representative), Anne Osborne and Marjorie Twaddle.



Jacquelin Kim doesn't mind being held by Ruth McIlvenna as Isabel Gerrard looks on. Ruth and Isabel at 90 are the oldest members of First, Trail, B.C., while Jacquelin is the youngest. *On our website:* Ruth and Isabel have cake!



Close readers of People and Places know that St. Andrew's, Welland, Ont., is a happening place. In January they had a daylong seminar called "Presenting the Living Presence of Christ in our Pastoral Visits," for which Rev. Dr. Roberta Clare of the Elder's Institute in Vancouver was the guest speaker. Not surprisingly nearly a 100 people attended the seminar. The Women's Association provided the lunch—to confirm it as a truly Presbyterian event.

*From left:* Ruby Lucas, Jessie Armstrong, Nancy Sieber, Margaret Hicks, Shirley Barnhart. *On our website:* Lori, Roberta and Guy.



A small, but joyful group gathered to greet the dawn on Easter Morning behind Mount Zion, Ridgetown, Ont., the first such gathering in many years. A scrumptious breakfast followed in the church. *Pictured:* Kent May, Phyllis May, Wayne Jackson, Alexis Shaw, Rev. Paul Shaw, Bryan Stirling, Lynda Stirling, Gloria Jackson. *Photographer:* Archie Dempster.





Knox, Agincourt, Ont., went on a pilgrimage to Israel in March. They're seen here in the Garden of Gethsemane, with the Golden Gates of the Old City of Jerusalem behind them. *Back row:* Alton Ellis, Said Rabieh (local guide), Rev. Ian Clark, Laurie Olsen *Front row:* Helen McRae, George Johnson, Mary Bacchus, Georgie Johnson, Greg Olsen, Moira Ellis, Lizabeth Kanhai, Rev. Catherine Clark Chalin, Margaret Jamieson, Doretta King, Robea Kronberg, Janet Muirhead.

## Had cake lately?

See [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca) for instructions on How To Submit Photos in the Digital Age.

### On our website:

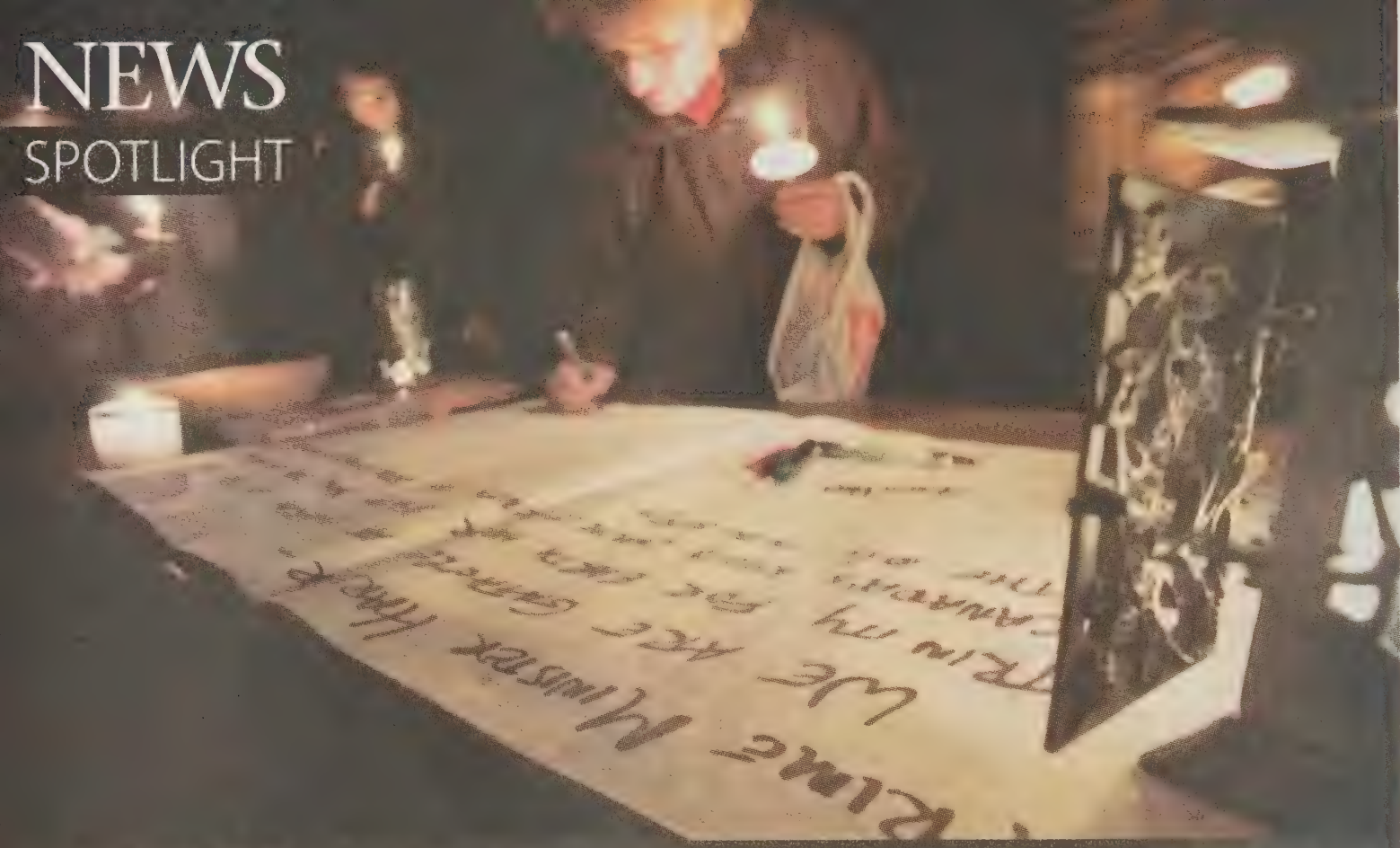
The Baby Boom continues at national offices (keep posted, at least two more to come this year). 150 years at Knox, Harrington. Dr. Bremner's 50-year service at St. Giles', Kingsway. Rev. Lampman goes to Madoc. Four new session members at First, New Westminster.

And, coming next month: more PWS&D related good news from St. Mathew's, Ingleside; plus, a remarkable story of a young lady in that church.

Also on our website: Lots of photographs from the Forum for Racial and Ethnic Minority Presbyterians, held at Crieff Hills in early April.

Presbyterian World Service and Development responds everyday to bad news around the world—and that, in a way, is the good news. It rises to the challenges of being Christ-like in the world. More good news: St. John's, Toronto, raised \$10,175.07 through classic fundraisers like bake sales. The children took the initiative—their efforts for water projects in Africa. Or as the kids say: It's all good. Barb Summers, with PWS&D, accepted the cheque and would agree.





Earth Hour, March 29, 2008: People across the world turned off their power for one hour. KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, an NGO supported by the Presbyterian Church, held an event at Holy Trinity, Toronto, where the gathered signed a petition to Prime Minister Harper to redirect oil and gas subsidies to more sustainable energy sources.

## Park Moderator-elect

REV. CHEOL SOON PARK of Toronto Korean has been named moderator-elect for the 2008 General Assembly this June in Ottawa. After he is formally voted in just after the assembly's opening worship service, Park will become the assembly's first Korean moderator. Park moved to Canada in 1983, received his Master of Divinity degree from Knox College in 1987, and is currently enrolled in a Doctor of Ministry program. He is also clerk of the Presbytery of Eastern Han-Ca, and has served on the Committee on Church Doctrine, the Evangelism Committee, the Centre for Asian-Canadian Theology and Ministry at Knox College, and the Board of Governors of Knox College.

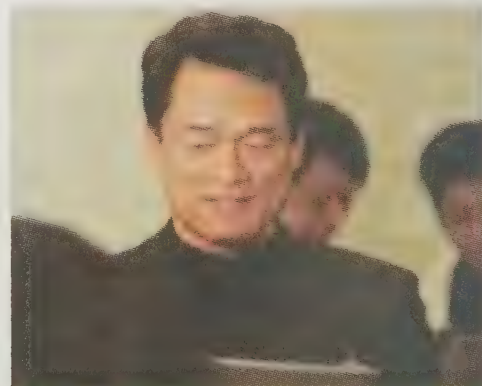
In an email to the *Record* Park wrote: "First of all, I'd like to extend

the most sincere gratitude to everyone in the Presbyterian Church in Canada for giving me the opportunity to serve the Church.

**'I believe there are some tough issues ahead of us. As we work together, we will find a resolution ...'**

"As I heard the news from the Principal Clerk of the Church, I was excited as well as worried. You know the feeling. I was excited for the possibilities, yet at the same time I was worried about the preparation and the amount of work involved. But most of all, I was truly thankful. Thankful for the love and acceptance of the Church.

"I am looking forward to meeting the commissioners at the General As-



sembly, listening to them and praying with them for the Church.

"I believe there are some tough issues ahead of us. As we work together, we will find a resolution—practical, flexible, yet concrete enough to make us all proud and thankful.

"I ask members of the Church for their prayer and advice." ■



# A Challenging Call

North American ecumenists discuss their future.

A DOCUMENT THAT HAS “the capacity to change the World Council of Churches” was the subject of discussion at a series of meetings held in Toronto in early April. *Called To Be One Church* challenges churches to act upon the unity they seek with each other, Rev. Canon Dr. John Gibaut, Director of the WCC’s Faith and Order committee, told an assembly of members from the United States and Canada. The brief document—at 2,300 words it is a filtering down of various other statements on the nature and purpose of the church dating to 1998—“challenges us with 10 questions” that set the WCC’s 349 member churches on “a call to journey ... an arduous yet joyful path.”

Gibaut was speaking at the second day of a joint series of meetings between the World Council of Churches Relations Committee (WCCR) and the board of the United States Conference for the World Council of Churches, held at Trinity College, Toronto. The first day of meetings were at St. Andrew’s, King St., Toronto. Much of the first day was taken up with business meetings and discussion on the future of the WCC in light of Samuel Kobia’s decision to not seek another term as general secretary.

The second day was spent discussing *Called To Be One Church*, which Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon, General Secretary, NCCCUA, said “seeks to promote relationships among churches, which is the heart of all councils of churches.”

“This statement comes at a critical time, a time of denominational redefinition,” said Rev. Canon Dr. Alyson Barnett-Cowan, Director of Faith, Worship and Ministry, at the Anglican Church of Canada. She joked her church was a great example of this

shift, holding a very public debate on homosexuality in “the internet age.” “Many churches are internally divided and this is an acid test for ecumenism.”

At the heart of the discussion was the nature and the future of ecumenism itself. Other speakers noted that an Orthodox church had pulled out of ecumenical discussions re-

**At the heart of the discussion was the nature and the future of ecumenism itself. Other speakers noted that an Orthodox church had pulled out of ecumenical discussions recently**

cently. And others made note of Pope Benedict XVI’s widely reported statement last year that Roman Catholicism was the only true church. Margaret O’Gara, faculty at St. Michael’s College, Toronto, said the Pope’s statement was largely misunderstood since it was meant to be an internal church document and was written in the church’s own largely obscure language and jargon. She said the document was a defense against those internal factions which sought to isolate the Roman Catholic Church from the ecumenical movement and was a reiteration of Vatican II’s support of ecumenism.

“All churches are wounded by division,” she noted. “We can’t continue to run from each other.” She, amongst others, listed same-sex, women’s ordination, just war and abortion as issues that continue to hinder a conversation of mutual responsibility demanded by the document.

*Called to Be One Church* can be found on the WCC’s website: oikoumene.org. ■—AF

## BUILDING HOPE

### Clarina’s Story:

**Anishinabe Place of Hope -  
Endaayaang**

It’s almost been six months since we moved into our new endaayaang (home). The excitement has worn off and each individual’s behavior is changing. The staff are doing an awesome job of keeping on top of all the adjustments that we are going through.

This is my safe place where I can concentrate and be myself. I know outside my apartment door is my support. I have come a long way and I so look forward to entering a new and exciting phase of my life, which includes the courses I am taking at the University of Winnipeg.



**WICM**

I am getting involved with the traditional teachings which are available at Anishinabe Place of Hope - Endaayaang. Integrating the technological world with the way of life of our ancestors is so exciting. I believe that we are the future role models for our community and future generations can benefit greatly.

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# Small Steps; Big Changes

A PWS&D intern learns how women inch into the future. BY ELISE THORBURN

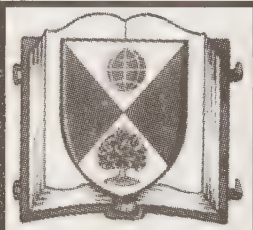
WHEN I APPLIED FOR the internship offered by Presbyterian World Service and Development to work with the Institute for Women's Research Training and Development in El Salvador for nine months, it was not done on a whim. I had spent the last three years looking forward to the moment that I would apply for a position overseas. In my final year of undergraduate study—majoring in International Development and Women's Studies at Dalhousie University in Halifax—a friend told me about an international internship program funded by the Canadian International Development Agency. I immediately did some research and decided that I too would participate in an overseas internship following graduation.

Working with IMU has been chal-

lenging. Nearly every woman I met, at workshops or meetings, or even in private, has her own tale of violence to tell—spousal abuse or parental abuse, neglect, emotional violence, feelings of worthlessness and uselessness, and disrespect. But most of these stories are firmly ensconced in the past. The majority of women working with associations aligned with IMU tell these histories as just that: histories. Cautionary tales of what befell them, but that which they will never allow to befall their children or themselves again. They work actively towards changing their positions, beginning with the smallest political microcosm—their own family. They state they have learned they have personal worth and value, and that they have the right to an opinion, to assert

themselves, and to say “no.” Things are changing.

The grander, national and global level change that IMU strives for in the long term will come about as a result of these smaller scale initiatives—anti-violence training, sexual and reproductive education, economic solidarity initiatives, and especially the political “incidencia” campaigns which encourage women to make their political demands known to leaders at the municipal to the national level. These slow moving, difficult-to-capture political changes resulting from the work of IMU strike me as the way of the future. I am honoured to be involved with such an important and valiant organization, and Canadian Presbyterians should feel proud that they are a part of this. ■



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# Council Readies for Assembly

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

REV. DR. HANS Kouwenberg told Assembly Council, at its pre-General Assembly meeting in March, that the Aboriginal and Church Leaders' Tour on which he represented the Presbyterian Church was "one of the most phenomenal experiences of my life." The Church's healing and reconciliation animator, Lori Ransom, reported that the turn-out for all four stops along the Canadian tour exceeded expectations (with about 1,500 people attending). There was strong Aboriginal participation, and it was a true step forward in having these two groups "walk together."

"There was a remarkable sense that this was good; that this was something they were pleased about," she said. The churches were challenged to carry the momentum forward, with the final message being the "need to do more."

Council agreed to use saved monies from the church's residential schools settlement fund (totaling approximately \$784,000) on the PCC's participation in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Justice Ministries' Healing and Reconciliation program, healing and reconciliation proposals from the church's established aboriginal

mission agencies, and events linked to the leaders' tour follow-up and possible General Assembly events.

The current regional staffing model—under review after the WMS cut its funding by 50 per cent—was affirmed but several areas were identified as needing clarification. Regional staff, while maintaining their independence,

## **The turn-out for all four stops along the healing and reconciliation tour exceeded expectations**

should seek to strengthen relationships with national church staff, resulting in better service and assistance to congregations and presbyteries; Assembly Council will keep tabs on the work of the Long Range Planning Committee and monitor what regional needs might be identified that the regional staff can act upon; Assembly Council will communicate concerns to synods regarding reporting relationships of regional staff (staff currently report to volunteer committees with high turnover) ensuring that local needs are truly being met; and Assembly Council will clarify the grant process with synods.

A human resources manual will be produced which will be used by all synods, and the staffing model will be reviewed by Assembly Council on a needs basis. The Management Team and Finance Committee will give serious consideration to making up the \$190,000 shortfall in funding resulting from the WMS decision.

The per kilometre travel allowance rate will be raised from \$0.35 to \$0.40 effective July 1. This applies to national staff, pulpit supply, and boards and committees of the church, and should act as a suggestion for other groups granting travel allowances. The rate had not been changed for five years, and the rate will now be reviewed annually.

The Policy for Dealing with Allegations of Racial Harassment, and the Statement of Commitment Toward Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Leadership at the National Level of the Presbyterian Church, were finally adopted after nearly four years of work. Three case studies that can be used to help churches understand the policy will also be developed. It will go to assembly for final approval before being distributed to congregations. ■

## PWS&D focuses on Central America

ALEX MACDONALD is the new program coordinator for work in Central America at Presbyterian World Service and Development. He has been the program assistant for communications since June 2006, and will fill the position effective June 2. He is fluent in Spanish, and has already been busy travelling to Central American countries to meet the church's partners and familiarize himself with the projects there. The Central America portfolio was previously managed by Guy Smagghe, who also coordinates PWS&D's work in Asia and government relations. Accord-

ing to Ken Kim, PWS&D's director, the change "reflects the increase in complexity and scope of our programming throughout the region."

"Increasingly we are working with partners on local capacity building," adds Kim. "Requiring the program coordinators to be more detail-oriented than before. The new appointment is to balance our current workload and to have individuals who can specialize in geographic regions to better serve the members of the church." ■  
—AM





# Observer Backs Darwin

THE UNITED CHURCH OBSERVER, the independent magazine of the United Church of Canada, is sponsoring a traveling exhibition focusing on the life and work of Charles Darwin currently on display at Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum.

"Darwin: The Evolution Revolution" failed to secure corporate sponsors in Toronto or any of the North American cities where it has been mounted, prompting *Observer* editor/publisher David Wilson to put some resources behind it.

"Our support is modest but symbolic," said Wilson in a press release.

"If a small church-based operation such as *The Observer* doesn't fear a backlash from those who oppose Darwin's theory of evolution, then secular corporate

**Darwin's theory that humans evolved from simple life forms stirs up controversy among Christians who take the Biblical account of creation literally**

entities with much greater resources shouldn't fear it either."

*The Observer* has been independently incorporated since 1986. As

such, the sponsorship does not speak for The United Church.

"There is nothing in the exhibit that threatens or diminishes religion or people of faith in any way," said Wilson. "If anything, it shines a light on the inherent beauty and wonder of a creation that is constantly and eternally evolving."

Still, Darwin's theory that humans evolved from simple life forms stirs up controversy among Christians who take the Biblical account of creation literally, particularly in parts of the United States where the teaching of faith-based alternatives to evolution in public schools (such as intelligent design) has generated headlines worldwide.

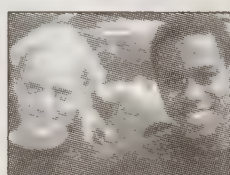
The exhibit runs until August 4 before moving to London in time for celebrations marking Darwin's 200th birthday in February 2009. ■

—with files from the United Church Observer and ENI



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# Janice Carter: United, Inspired



JANICE CARTER, editor of *The Presbyterian Message*, died on March 17 after a three and a half-year battle with cancer. She was 50 years old.

"Janice's life of courage and commitment was indeed an inspiration for us all," said Ann Taylor, president of the Atlantic Mission Society. "We are confident that she is now at Home with Our Father. We know that precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

*The Message* is the publication of the AMS, and Carter edited the magazine for 20 years—making her its second-longest running editor. She oversaw the publication of 200 issues. Unsuccessful chemotherapy treatments ended in June, and she dealt with severe pressure and pain in her brain since that time. Despite this, she carried out her editorial duties as best she could.

Friends and family speak of her smile, her infectious laughter, her dedication to her work, her courage throughout her illness, and her strong and unwavering faith.

"The Atlantic Mission Society has lost a great worker for *The Presbyterian Message* and the Society," said Helen Humphreys, past president of the AMS. "Janice had great faith and carried on the work as editor as long as she could. I can only repeat the words that were on the plaque I presented to her at the annual meeting last September: 'The AMS expresses thanks for 20 years of dedication to a work which has united, educated and inspired us.'"

A member of Knox, Kouchibouguac, N.B., Carter was born in Saint John, N.B., and was raised in Charlottetown, P.E.I. She leaves behind her husband Floyd (they would have celebrated their 25th anniversary on March 19), and four daughters, Julia, Rebecca, Cynthia and Amanda. ■

—AM with files from *The Presbyterian Message*

Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,  
and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.

Isaiah 32:16



PWS&D is working with local partners in Guatemala to ease suffering brought about by war, poverty and injustice. Innovative programs teach participants how to start small businesses, combat discrimination, help children go to school and overcome malnutrition. A future of hope is emerging.

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## Turner fights malaria

**ENI**—CNN founder Ted Turner, who once called Christianity “a religion for losers,” has launched a joint initiative with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the United Methodist Church to raise US\$200 million to fight malaria in Africa, which kills more than one million people each year.

Turner said he regrets anything negative he may have said about religion in the past. “Religion is one of the bright spots as far as I’m concerned, even though there are some areas, like everything else, where they’ve gone over the top,” Turner told the *Associated Press*. “But I’m sure God, wherever He is, wants to see us get along with one another and love one another.”

## Dutch Christians tallied

**ENI**—A new reference book lists 648 denominations and movements, making the Netherlands the country with the second-largest number of Christian groups in the world, after the United States which tops at 2,000 in a similar book.

The authors discern a general trend of a return to the “atmosphere” of the early Christian communities. While larger denominations are losing members, evangelical, Pentecostal and house congregations flourish.

The Catholic Church with 1,400 parishes and the Protestant Church in

the Netherlands, which has about 1,800 congregations, are the country’s two largest denominations.

## Civilizations not clashing

**ENI**—Christian journalists meeting in divided Cyprus urged unbiased and well-informed reporting on divisive issues founded on principles of equality, accessibility and dialogue.

“In an age when many analysts focus on the ‘clash of civilizations,’ it is the calling of Christian communicators and journalists to encourage communication between civilizations,” said a statement following the meeting of the European regional association of the World Association for Christian Communication, whose headquarters are in Toronto. “Participants in the seminar were struck anew by the importance of unbiased and well-informed reporting on sensitive issues involving wounded memories on both sides.”

Cyprus has been divided into separate sectors since 1974.

## Marriage Is Normal

**Barna**—Seventy-eight per cent of American adults get married at some point in their life, and among those who have been married, one out of three have been divorced at least once, according to a new study from The Barna Group.

An even higher proportion of born again Christians (84%) tie the knot, compared to 74% of people aligned with non-Christian faiths, and 65% of atheists and agnostics. Those with the lowest likelihood of divorcing are Catholics (28%), followed by evangelicals, Asians, and those who say they are conservative on social and political matters.

“Interviews with young adults suggest they want their initial marriage to last, but are not particularly optimistic about that possibility. There is also evidence that many young people are moving toward embracing the idea of serial marriage, in which a person gets married two or three times, seeking a different partner for each phase of their adult life,” said George Barna.

## Vatican respects Jews

**ENI**—The Vatican says it respects and

esteems Judaism, despite tension over a Good Friday prayer revived by the pontiff which some Jews say demeans their religion.

“The Holy See wishes to reassure that the new formulation of the prayer in no way intends to indicate a change in the Catholic Church’s regard for the Jews,” said an April statement from the Vatican press office.

Pope Benedict XVI announced in 2007 that the church would permit wider use of the traditional Latin Mass which includes Good Friday prayer language that refers to the “blindness” of Jews in not acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah. In February, the Vatican revised the prayer, but it includes a reference to the need for Jews to acknowledge “Jesus Christ as the saviour”.

Abraham H. Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, says this is “two steps forward and three steps backward” regarding the church’s intentions for improved inter-religious relations.

## Qatar Opens First Church

**Al Jazeera.net**—A Catholic Church has been erected and was consecrated on Easter weekend in Doha, Qatar. The Church of Our Lady of the Rosary will serve Doha’s nearly 150,000 Catholics, comprised of expatriate workers mainly from South Asia and the Philippines.

“The church will send a positive message to the world,” said Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah, Qatar’s minister of energy and industry, during the unveiling of the \$20-million complex.

But because some say the church goes against Qatar’s Islamic values, religious leaders and government officials have been cautious about trumpeting the news too loudly. Security patrols are to monitor the complex for months to come.

In keeping with government requests, the building’s exterior bears no crosses, steeple or church bells.

Religious leaders have promised not to proselytize, and because it is illegal in Qatar for Muslims to convert to other religions, the church must handle any natives interested in Christianity with extra care.

Construction of buildings for Anglican, Coptic, Greek Orthodox and an inter-denominational centre is also under way. ■



# Encourage Voice

Then Listen. BY ANDREW FAIZ

Earlier this year I had an email exchange with my favourite sparring partner, Rev. David Webber, over the fact that rural issues are not well covered in the magazine. A few weeks later I had a passionate email from a lady in Saskatchewan who was expressing the opinion of her friends that the *Record* does not do enough stories about the western part of this country.

In April I was at a very interesting conference of immigrant and ethnic members of the Presbyterian Church. In a closing statement they said of themselves that they felt “marginalized” within the church. (I will be reporting on this conference in a later issue.)

Last September Presbyterian youths, Patricia and Ryan Browne, wrote in the *Record*: “Our home church, like many Presbyterian churches, doesn’t seem to have a place for us. We are approaching the void.”

Over the years I have met many other people who feel marginalized within, and perhaps even by, the church. (Our cover stories this month are about the aftermath of a heinous policy whereby the church actively marginalized—negated, many would say—a large segment of the body of Christ.) The *Record* received a powerful letter a year ago which spoke of the loneliness and pain a homosexual person felt within the church.

The list is incomplete, I know, of all the people who feel left outside. There was a project started in Toronto several years ago which was supposed to reach the unchurched, that is those people who have spiritual yearnings but no religious experience. Within a year, however, the project demographic shifted interestingly to those who were churched, but disgusted with, or just merely tired of, church. That is, they knew when to stand up and sit down during Sunday worship, but didn’t feel the church was interested in speaking to them.

My feeble defense to Webber and the lady from Saskatchewan was the same: Yes, oh yes, more can be done to tell rural and western stories and the only practical way of managing that is to have rural and western folk feed those stories to the magazine.

But, when I said something similar at the race conference a minister kindly chastised me because he felt the

*Record* could have done a better job in telling a story his congregation had forwarded. I agreed and begged him to not judge the magazine with that one example.

We strive at the magazine to be all-to-all but we realize we may end up little-to-most. It’s a daily challenge to give voice to all the members of the church—young-mature; rural-urban; Ontario-restofCanada; established-forming. We affirm we are open to all voices—with the usual provisos about hate and discrimination—and we need our readers and members to feel empowered to share those stories.

**We strive at the magazine to be all-to-all but we realize we may end up little-to-most. It’s a daily challenge to give voice to all the members of the church**

The Brownes had come to the same conclusion in their article last fall: “So, let’s step up, young adults, let’s make our voice known, and create a place by ourselves, for ourselves.” That’s the right attitude and the best approach.

But it ain’t always easy: yes, anyone can walk into a church on a Sunday morning and worship God and His Son, but the church has to be welcoming. It’s not only about faith and theology, it’s also about (and often largely about) hospitality. Leave the church doors open on Sunday morning and at least one new person will walk through per month—12 new members a year, if you know how to feed them.

Feed them; then nurture them; get them onto the session; more nurturing; encourage the voice; then listen; nudge them to the heart of the Presbyterian power-base: Presbytery. Now they’ll need a lot of nurturing because one of the great uncollected statistics is the number of Presbyterians turned-off Church by a presbytery meeting.

The antidote to marginalization is Voice. The *Record* is open to all voices; but, that’s not enough. They have to be heard in presbytery! And, that is a much more complicated, but much more rewarding, matter. ■

*Andrew Faiz is the managing editor of this publication.*

# AUDACIOUS HOPE

“There is an emerging and compelling desire to put the events of the past behind us so that we can work towards a stronger and healthier future. The truth telling and reconciliation process as part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy is a sincere indication and

acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing. The truth of our common experiences will help set our spirits free and pave the way to reconciliation.”

– *Preamble to the Mandate for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.* ►



COVER  
FEATURE





# Remembering Forward

Something important happened on the tour of Aboriginal and Church leaders.

BY LORI RANSOM

**T**he hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know."—Ezekiel 37:1-3

The turnout in all four stops of the Aboriginal and Church leaders' tour to promote healing and reconciliation—Ottawa, Vancouver, Saskatoon and Winnipeg—exceeded our expectations and seating capacity. There were optimistic, indeed celebratory moments, such as a spirited round dance in Ottawa led by Aboriginal children wearing colourful regalia. Some 500 people joined hands in this circle, looking forward to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and seemingly believing that there will be real healing and reconciliation between us.

There have been powerful moments: survivors weeping in Vancouver on hearing the recorded voices of other survivors, voices giving life to the pain and suffering of the children who were taken from their mothers and fathers, forced to adopt customs and a religion of another people, psychologically abused, while some were also abused physically and sexually.

Ted Quewezance, executive director of the National Residential Schools Society, reached into the very core of our beings when he described the little boy inside him. He reminded us of the little child inside each of us, helping us move just a little closer to understanding the pain of his childhood experience, and that of his family.

Ted also stunned those of us from the churches by the depth of the gratitude he expressed to the church leaders for the sincerity of their words. They touched him deeply.



We did not expect this level of affirmation. He stated that he too had not expected the church leaders to go so far in acknowledging the churches' failure to love him and the other Aboriginal children who attended residential schools.

Ted spoke of the difference it makes to hear an apology or confession from another human being—how much more real and meaningful it is to be in the presence of someone apologizing to you, than it is to read an institution's apology or confession on a piece of paper. It is the same for us who did not go to a residential school. We cannot truly grasp what happened to the First Nation, Inuit and Métis people in the schools by reading the stories of survivors in a book, a newspaper or magazine. We need to listen in the presence of individual survivors as they speak their truth in love to us.

In Saskatoon, a baptism was held for a beautiful child, Dominic Lukan—we celebrated a new life, and the spirit of God's presence. The readings at that gathering were resurrection stories: God breathes new life into the dry bones of the house of Israel; and then the Lazarus story, brought to life by a group of readers, voicing the words of those who take part in the account from John's Gospel.

The question for all of us taking part in the Aboriginal and Church leaders' tour is: Are we responding faithfully, and well, to the work of God, to the Creator's living spirit among us? Are we allowing God to do the work that is needed in Canada to heal the wounds of our past, and to bring about true healing and reconciliation?

I cringe remembering how poor the sound system was in Winnipeg, the event for which I and the Presbyterian Church had the lead responsibility among the organizers of the tour. My heart sunk sitting at The Forks, as I realized people had to strain themselves to hear Elijah Harper, a residential school survivor, and an iconic figure among the Aboriginal people of his home province of Manitoba. And yet there's a lesson here, beyond the obvious need to pre-check a sound system. There are times when we need to work hard to listen.

I suggest we need to be prepared to strain ourselves to hear, in person, the stories of survivors from the residential schools. "Survivors" is what they call themselves. It is not a label others have applied to them. And we should not expect residential school survivors to make it easy for us, by offering comforting words of forgiveness along with a depiction of the pain and trauma they have suffered. We need to be prepared to be exhausted by the process.

After 18 months of work with many partners at national and local levels, I am writing three days after the last tour event with a deep feeling of exhaustion, finding it a bit too soon to assess the tour objectively. The response of the leaders, and of the Winnipeg organizing committee with whom I worked through February, tells me something important happened. Many of them are exhausted. Some of us

came down with what I've dubbed the "leaders' tour cold." Yet the leaders all have felt a change in themselves for their involvement in the tour. Something important happened to them in the process of listening to others at these events. I saw it in Hans Kouwenberg's face as he preached at St. Andrew's, Saskatoon, and privately as he talked about the tour. It has sparked something new in him, new passion and energy for the pursuit of healing and reconciliation.

The tour itself came together through a process of building new relationships, a process which in and of itself contributes to healing and reconciliation. Members of the Presbyterian, United, Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches and Aboriginal organizations and communities worked in partnership, on both national and local committees, to organize the tour events.

New life certainly was given to me during the tour, when I picked up the phone time after time in late January, calling people in Winnipeg whom I had never met, members of the Aboriginal community and other church communities, to invite them to take part in planning the Winnipeg event with less than six weeks' notice. No one asked for time to think. No one said no, they'd rather not

be involved. Everyone immediately said yes; they wanted to be part of something designed to support healing and reconciliation. And they all worked very hard to make our event happen. We listened to each other. We scrambled. We made compromises. Everything did not run smoothly. Perhaps this is another helpful message, that there is work still to be done among us. Even with the best of intentions among all parties, getting things to run smoothly, achieving the kind of relationship we long for, will require much more than attending a few remarkable leaders' tour events. We are going to need to invest much time and effort in listening to each other, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and in working together.

The Moderator of the United Church of Canada, Right Rev. Dr. David Giuliano, said it's not just about remembering the children of residential schools, it is about remembering their children, their children's children, and our own children. "Remembering forward," as he put it. Healing and reconciliation is future-oriented. It's about breathing life into the dry bones of a broken relationship.

There will be opportunities to listen to each other when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission begins its work, and opportunities for churches and Aboriginal communities to work together. We will need to work hard at listening, be prepared to strain ourselves when the sounds of others' voices are difficult to hear, to allow their voices to touch us, right down to the core of our beings. ■

*Lori Ransom is the Presbyterian Church's Healing and Reconciliation Animator.*

**There have been powerful moments: survivors weeping in Vancouver on hearing the recorded voices of other survivors, voices giving life to the pain and suffering of the children who were taken from their mothers and fathers**





# First, Confess Then, Celebrate

The tour marks the path of hope from suffering into peace.

BY KATIE MUNNIK

Sunday, March 2 was the launch of Remembering the Children, a cross-Canada tour promoting the upcoming Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Residential Schools. Aboriginal and church leaders gathered along with a colourful collection of singers, dancers, musicians and children in the Grand Hall of the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa. This enormous hall, designed by Aboriginal architect Douglas Cardinal, is home to six reconstructed Native houses from coastal British Columbia and 43 totem poles, the largest collection in the world. Through the three-storey windows,

you can see across the river to Parliament Hill. It proved an appropriate backdrop to a dramatic evening.

The event began with the pounding of drums. The assembly of almost 500 people rose to their feet as five young Aboriginal women entered the Grand Hall dancing. With ribbons, feathers, hoops and clattering beads, the dancers opened an evening focused on beginning the journey of reconciliation.

Right Rev. David Giuliano, moderator of the United Church of Canada, spoke of the “audacious hope” of the gathering. It was a night to listen to the history of



residential schools in Canada, to confess and mourn the damage done in the name of Christ, and to celebrate Aboriginal culture. As Giuliano said, "To truly hear someone else's story is to be changed by it." The path of

**The Remembering the Children tour marks the path of hope from suffering into peace, from ignorance into healing**

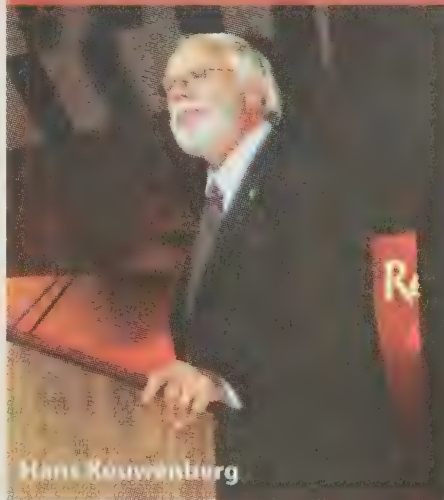
reconciliation—of restoring goodwill in relations that have been disrupted—begins with hearing.

In 1857 the Gradual Civilization Act passed to assimilate Indians. As Giuliano described it, this assimilation was born from a misguided desire on the part of the churches to share the truth paired with an unwillingness to hear the truth spoken by others. The ensuing assimilation was gradual at first, though deliberate, but by 1920, attendance at residential schools was compulsory for all Aboriginal children, seven to 15 years. Children were denied family, language, tradition, and religion in an effort to remove Aboriginal cultures and assimilate Aboriginal children into the lower fringes of the larger Canadian society. In the 1980s, residential school students began disclosing stories of sexual, physical and psychological abuse.

Phil Fontaine, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations and himself a survivor of the residential school system, said this sad story "belongs to the country." Over the last 12 years, since the closing of the last federally run residential school, the Gordon Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan, Canadians have worked together to develop a path towards recognition and healing. In 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report was released and recommended



**It was a night to listen to the history of residential schools in Canada, to confess and mourn the damage done in the name of Christ, and to celebrate Aboriginal culture. As Giuliano said, "To truly hear someone else's story is to be changed by it"**



**The Remembering the Children tour stopped in Ottawa (Mar. 2), Vancouver (Mar. 5), Saskatoon (Mar. 9) and Winnipeg (Mar. 10).**

**The Native and Church leaders were:**

- **Phil Fontaine, National Chief, the Assembly of First Nations**
- **Rt. Rev. Dr. David Giuliano, Moderator, the United Church of Canada**
- **Most Rev. Fred Hiltz, Primate, the Anglican Church of Canada**
- **Rev. Dr. J.H. (Hans) Kouwenberg, Moderator, the Presbyterian Church in Canada**
- **Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, the Anglican Church of Canada**

**For more information, please go to [www.rememberingthechildren.ca](http://www.rememberingthechildren.ca).**

that a public inquiry be held to investigate and document the abuses suffered in residential schools. September 19, 2007 marked the finalization and implementation of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

Canada is among many countries to use the model of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. That commission, established in 1995 and chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, provided the means for South Africa to recognize and face its legacy of apartheid. It proved a major step in the peaceful transition to democracy in that country. Unlike other TRCs, Canada's will happen after compensation has been agreed upon.

The Canadian TRC will create a permanent record of the residential school experience. To this end, churches and government officials have agreed to make their archives and historical documents available to the commission, and a national research centre will be established. However, the process of truth-sharing will not be centralized. It will happen in the communities where the survivors and their families live. This process will belong to the people who have suffered. By bearing witness in appropriate and accessible ways to what has gone before, it is hoped that right relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians can be established and a shared hope for the future can be created.

The Remembering the Children tour marks the path of hope from suffering into peace, from ignorance into healing. The evening ended as it began—with drums—but this time, the dance was much larger. The whole assembly stood and joined hands in a powerful, pulsing circle dance, weaving in and out among the chairs, under the shadows of the towering totem poles. ■

*Katie Munnik lives in Ottawa.*





# A Heavy Page

We can hold hands and move forward together.

BY KATHLEEN BOLTON KONRAD

**I**t was a "historic and sacred moment in the history of Canada," said Rev. Dr. J. H. (Hans) Kouwenberg, reflecting upon the second stop of the Aboriginal and Church Leaders' Tour to Prepare for Truth and Reconciliation, held at the University of British Columbia on the evening of March 5. Beginning at the Vancouver School of Theology, well over 300 attendees were led by the beat of a Musqueam drummer, Victor Guerin, on a ceremonial walk to the Museum of Anthropology. It couldn't have been a more suitable setting for this time of truth-telling, listening, learning and healing—sitting in the great hall with the totem poles as a backdrop, in the area that had once been the site of a Musqueam warriors' village. Garan informed the audience that his people's warriors were first and foremost peacekeepers.

The tour was one of the first steps towards implementing Gathering Strength, Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan, unveiled by the federal government back in 1998, which included a statement of reconciliation acknowledging the Canadian government's role in Indian residential schools. Government may act slowly, but those present were witnessing a page of history in the making.

British Columbia's Regional Chief Shawn Atleo of the Assembly of First Nations (son of a residential school survivor) recalled conversations with his grandmother. She had spoken of a "heavy page that'll take a lot to turn it." Through the efforts of many people—both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, Christian and non-Christian—that page is finally turning. The Aboriginal people's resilience, strength and courage help them hope for healing and reconcilia-



tion, but they also realize that there need to be many difficult discussions in the process. Atleo said they need to move beyond the hurt and pain, and he quoted a Navaho leader: "The most powerful tool in justice is Kleenex." Atleo was sure that when he reported back to his grandmother, she would say, "Our prayers are being answered."

Bob Watts, interim executive director of the TRC, reported on progress, including how the Aboriginal people are being empowered: they are being given a voice to express issues to be addressed, such as missing children and unmarked gravesites. As well, financial compensation is being offered to the estimated 80,000 survivors of the residential schools. The government is soon to designate three commissioners to head up the TRC, which will give survivors "an opportunity to share their individual experiences in a safe and culturally appropriate manner through statement taking or truth-sharing."

The Vancouver leg of the tour had a spiritual focus. Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald, National Anglican Indigenous Bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada, commented on the Spirit touching people's minds and hearts. Rev. Dr.

Wendy Fletcher, principal of VST and whose grandfather was of Native descent, remarked that we were standing on sacred ground. She also said, "If we know the truth, the truth will set us free." It is hoped that this process of truth-telling and reconciliation will free the Aboriginal people of their painful past and free the churches of their guilt so that right relations can be restored and we can hold hands and move forward together.

After the completion of the program at the museum, the Musqueam drummer, once again drumming and singing a Musqueam paddling song, escorted walkers back to VST. It was like we were paddling along with a common goal. As the drumbeats echoed back to us from the buildings across the road, it seemed as if the Aboriginal ancestors were there in spirit and gave

their approval of these first steps towards peace and reconciliation between their people and those of the church. For the church's part, the more we are able to support the TRC and its efforts, the more we acknowledge the value of the Aboriginal people—especially the survivors. ■

*Kathleen Konrad lives in Vancouver.*

**It is hoped that this process of truth-telling and reconciliation will free the Aboriginal people of their painful past and free the churches of their guilt so that right relations can be restored and we can hold hands and move forward together**

## The Gradual Civilization Act

The federal policy of assimilation had its origin in the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857, which was reinforced by the Indian Act of 1876 and sanctioned by successive parliaments of Canada. The Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and United Churches provided staff and administration to the schools established by the government.

"If you read the language of the policy of assimilation, the language itself is so disturbing, for it speaks of removing children, and I quote, from their 'evil surroundings' ... [and] 'the savage child would be remade into a civilized adult,'" Anglican Primate Rev. Fred Hiltz told the gathering in Saskatoon.

Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg quoted from the apology issued by the Presbyterian Church in 1994. "For our church we ask forgiveness. It is our hope that those we

have wronged with a hurt too deep for telling will accept what we have to say. With God's guidance, our church will seek opportunities to walk with Aboriginal peoples to find healing and wholeness together as God's people."

He then detailed some of the steps being taken to live up to that promise to walk together.

"Saskatoon is home to Rev. Stewart Folster, a Presbyterian minister from the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation in Manitoba. Stewart runs the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry. Here, he has established a safe place where Aboriginal people can come into a welcoming environment to meet with friends. These are individuals who struggle daily to find enough food to eat, to obtain a bed to sleep in, a shelter from the cold, and to find work to support themselves," Kouwenberg said.

"We need to learn how to be a greater blessing to them."

He also described an elders program founded by the ecumenical chaplaincy office at the University of Saskatchewan, developed by Ursula Wiig, "which allows Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students to meet together with Native elders and learn more about the rich spiritual traditions of indigenous peoples."

In addition, Saskatchewan is home to the only remaining Presbyterian congregation that is located on a reserve, the Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church. "We want to grow in our relationship with the people of Mistawasis who have a special role in helping us understand how to heal our broken relationships with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters," said Kouwenberg. —Kiply Lukan Yaworski

# Gifts from God

Survivors in Saskatoon share their stories. BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

**“W**e are appealing to the general public to talk to their Members of Parliament, their legislators ... to encourage them to get the Prime Minister of Canada to formally apologize for the atrocities that occurred at the hands of the governments of the past,” Chief Lawrence Joseph of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations said to the 500 people gathered at the Saskatoon Western Development Museum.

“I want to tell the truth. I have been around for a long time and I have seen the holocaust that is there as a result of Eurocentric policies that definitely did not work for First Nations people,” said Joseph.

Ted Quewezance, executive director of the National Residential School Survivors Society, related his own experience. “All I had was my grandparents, and the government of Canada, Indian Affairs, came and dragged me away from my grandpa and they told my grandpa that ‘if you don’t let this little boy go, you’ll be going to jail.’”

Sexually abused from the age of five to 11 by those in positions of trust, he told of the devastation of eventually revealing his experiences to his family, to his wife and five daughters. He also related the trauma of going through disclosure in court, and of being called a liar. “I’m still here. And many, many survivors across the country are still here.

“What has happened to us as little boys and little girls in those residential schools is one of the best-kept secrets in this country,” he said. “I personally ask each and every one to follow, to read the information. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be coming and we have to tell our stories.”

Rev. George Yando, minister at Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church on the reserve at Mistawasis, Saskatchewan, told the *Record* the event gave him hope. “I’m excited that the process is beginning and hopeful that it will raise awareness amongst non-Native Canadians, within the church and without, about the legacy of the residential schools.”

Some members of the Mistawasis community are wary about the truth and reconciliation process, admitted Yando. “There is some resistance, and a sense of ‘we’re getting tired of telling you our story: you need to start listening.’”

Yando has spent four years at Mistawasis: a blessing characterized by humour, joy and welcome. “Walking with these folks is a privilege that not enough Presbyterians have had,” he said. Yando said he would encourage everyone to be a part of the Truth and Reconciliation process by really listening, by attending public hearings, and by following the coverage in the media and on the web page.

Rev. Amanda Currie from St. Andrew’s, Saskatoon, said she appreciated the heartfelt words of both Aboriginal and

Church Leaders at the Remembering the Children event in Saskatoon. She was particularly moved when all survivors of residential schools were invited to stand. “Their courage and their strength had an impact on those who were here. We all need to be listening, to be part of the circle, to actually be with the people who have suffered and are continuing to suffer by what we have done.”

A challenge close to home will be for her own congregation to continue forging connections with First Nations neighbours, including those at nearby

Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry, Currie said.

Saskatoon Native Circle is a frontline ministry in the core neighbourhood of the city, said Presbyterian minister Rev. Stewart Folster. The Saskatoon event carried seeds of hope for him. His involvement in collecting the stories of residential school survivors for the task force that worked on the Presbyterian Church apology in 1994 was a “heavy time,” he added. “It was so emotional, it was so deep for me, because these are my people they are talking about. I know the history of First Nations people in Canada, I’ve studied it, I’ve studied about the effects of colonialism and poverty. And I see it every day. I work with it every day. My own children have suffered from it.”

He also reflected on the ongoing struggle to keep his own ministry viable, and to avoid burnout in the face of so much suffering. “I’ve been working for the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry for 15 years, and we still don’t have our own place,” Folster added. “That’s a big frustration for me. I think it’s a real shame that we’re still working under these conditions. Send me the people who can help make this happen.” ■

*Kiply Lukan Yaworski is the communications director for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.*



# The Weight of Sin

The path to forgiveness is messy and difficult. BY JUDITH FARRIS

**R**econciliation: Grand Chief Ron Evans called it a “journey we have to take” in his welcome to those gathered at the Remembering the Children event at the Forks Market in Winnipeg. Comparing reconciliation between the church and First Nations people to a journey did not surprise me, realizing it was a journey I myself have to take. I was prepared for polished presentations from church and aboriginal dignitaries signifying their willingness to cooperate with each other. As the Gaudry Boys opened the evening with fiddling, I settled into my chair prepared to observe the production with polite detachment.

What I was unprepared for was the raw humanity of the event. One of the speakers, Ken Young, had to leave early because he received a phone call that his brother, also a residential school survivor, had died that day. He wanted to share his message before he left. Another speaker hadn’t been on the program at all. She held up a feather, walked to the front, and began speaking of the horrific spiritual and physical abuse she had endured. There was no question of politely asking her to sit down. Eventually, someone gave her a microphone. “We went through hell,” she stated, “but we survived. I intend to be a survivor. I will never forget. I will forgive, but I will never forget.” When the Primate of the Anglican Church was speaking, a woman five feet away from me stood up and began yelling that the church leaders were uttering lies. I found her language shocking at a church event—but it was a powerful and truthful moment, as we witnessed the depths of her pain. Honourable Elijah Harper, who took the stage with his son-in-law and two-month-old grandson, was unable to speak for several minutes, his voice faltering after saying, “It’s hard.” He spoke about his grandson and, he spoke less like a politician and more like a prophet.

Harper spoke of the necessity of forgiveness, which he considers “the greatest thing you can do for your people and for our children.” Part of forgiveness is an acknowledgement of wrongdoing. Explaining the importance of an official apology from the Government of Canada, Harper, who identifies himself as a Christian, compared himself to Moses before Pharaoh, saying, “Release my people ... from that

bondage so we can heal.”

Ted Quewezance, executive director of the National Residential School Survivors’ Society, spoke of the hurt of being shunned and shamed by his community, even his own children, when he first spoke out about the sexual abuse he experienced. Quewezance, who said with great feeling that “there is such a thing as forgiveness,” stated that he could relate to those who expressed anger toward the church. He

commented that “many people tell us to forget, forgive, heal,” but that the decision to set out on the path of forgiveness is up to each individual. Survivors are at many different stages in their journeys: “Some are bitter, some are happy, some are watching and waiting,” and “many cannot attend such functions.”

On behalf of the churches, the church leaders acknowledged our sin and asked for forgiveness at this event. We saw that apology both angrily rejected and lovingly accepted. Quewezance affirmed that it is different “to hear a person give

an apology than to see it in writing.” It is hard to forgive a faceless institution.

To hear the stories of a handful of survivors—to be entrusted with these stories—was humbling and even frightening. We were confronted with both exposed emotional wounds and with signs of healing. We were invited to witness and engage in the messy yet essential work of reconciliation. The truth is messy; it’s going to offend us Presbyterians. The process of speaking and hearing the truth in the upcoming Truth and Reconciliation Commission isn’t going to be safe. The path is treacherous, but it is the right path, the path God has shown us when He forgave us through the cross. I had heard of what was wrong with our participation in residential schools before, but the gathering at the Forks was the first time I felt the weight of our sin. I saw how messy and difficult asking forgiveness for that sin is going to be. I also saw glimpses of a path to reconciliation on which many are already journeying. ■

*Judith Farris lives in Winnipeg.*



Manitoba Archbishops Reynald Rouleau and Emilius Goulet



# Walks of Reconciliation

Something new was born during the Leaders' Tour. BY REV. DR. HANS KOUWENBERG

It was fitting that the Marketplace Court at the Forks in Winnipeg should be the last stop in our national Aboriginal and Church Leaders' tour. For it was here, at this traditional stopping place at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, that Aboriginal peoples gathered for centuries to meet, to share food and medicine, to discuss issues of common concern and to trade. It was here, too, that new inhabitants of Canada met with the Aboriginal peoples and shared their cultures, thereby offering an opportunity to grow together as peoples and become enriched as individual human beings in building bonds of friendship and new understanding.

But it didn't continue to happen. Sadly, our Euro-Canadian culture sought to dominate, subjugate and assimilate the Aboriginal peoples, especially by means of the infamous residential schools. Now, after our churches have apologized and re-covenanted with Aboriginal peoples, and with the federal government's apology and appointment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission just around the corner, we have an historic opportunity to build better, more equal partnerships.

Each event in our tour had a life of its own, yet perhaps this event was the most informal—seated, as we were, among the shops, inspired by moving traditional opening prayers and ceremony, and entertained, as we were, by foot-stomping fiddlers and great Aboriginal singers and dancers. It was, perhaps, also the most intense—as we heard again the stories of terrible pain and loss, and then realized that this all too brief beginning of a new journey that we are making with each other was coming to an end. As Fred Hiltz, the Anglican Primate, reminded us, we were now on the threshold of Holy Week, the last week of our Lord's life, as he prepared for his death upon the cross by which God seeks to reconcile all humankind. All of us who travelled to Ottawa, Vancouver, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg have

realized just how important this walk has been, symbolic of other, longer walks of reconciliation that all Canadians need to make with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, as we really hear the truth about the sad legacy of residential

schools and seek new levels of understanding and partnership as peoples who are invited to live in multicultural harmony upon this great gift of land given to all of us by our Creator God.

Elder, the Honourable Elijah Harper, with his children and grandchildren by his side, reminded us how Aboriginal people have shared this gift as an act of gracious hospitality. He also spoke from his heart with a greatness of spirit, that no one could compel from another,

about the forgiveness he was willing to offer so that personal and corporate healing and new conversations could begin. Yet, a grandmother reminded us of how difficult it was to say words of forgiveness when she couldn't forget how she had been beaten as a seven-year-old child, so severely that she couldn't get up for eight weeks. Ted Quewezance, executive director of the National Residential Schools Survivors Society, spoke of the reasons why many Aboriginal peoples are the way they are and of the tremendous hope he had that a new day was coming.

Those of us who walked this short journey together—Aboriginal and Church leaders alike, as well as many in the large crowds that attended each session of this 10-day tour—felt, as National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald said, "Something new was born here today; something that is bigger than any one of us." We have been changed by this trip. Our prayer is that many others will also be changed by what the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will bring to all of Canada. ■

*Rev. Dr. J.H. (Hans) Kouwenberg is the Moderator of the 133rd General Assembly. He gave this address in Winnipeg on March 10, 2008.*

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# INTERSECTION

A glimmer of another faith tradition may illuminate our own. BY KEITH RANDALL

**N**orman Wirzba writes in *Living the Sabbath* of “the principle that was well-known in ancient or traditional cultures: bodily health includes the health of many bodies, human and non-human, we necessarily live with.” He echoes the teachings of Canada’s First Nations that everything around us, animate and inanimate, is “all my relations.”

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has endorsed Healing and Reconciliation to transform society for the better by helping Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people develop a new understanding and build a new relationship founded on mutual respect and love. In 2006, The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal, signed a twinning covenant with the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry, confirming a five-year relationship. Friendships have formed, tears and laughter have been shared, but understanding ultimately touches the spiritual. The intersection of Christian and Aboriginal faith is a challenging crossroads.

“We say there are four learnings,” says Vern Douglas, an Ojibway and cultural advisor at Trent University, Peterborough, Ont. “Awareness is ►





first. There's no learning without awareness, but next is understanding which leads to knowledge which leads to wisdom."

Let us, then, seek awareness.

"There's only one Creator, Ghi-mndo [pronounced Zhay-m'ndo] in Ojibway, the rest are relations," he explains. "There's a spiritual life in everything Ghi-mndo created. We give thanks and acknowledge our humility and relationship in the grand scheme of things."

Colin Scott, associate professor of anthropology at McGill University, has spent 30 years working with Cree hunters in Wemindji on the James Bay coast. He talks about comfort in plurality.

"I work mainly with people who never lost a deep, rich continuity in their relationship with a world in which, frankly, Christianity is a non-starter. In the bush, dealing with a multiplicity of experience, depths, variety and nuance, there is a whole cultural legacy supporting that experience that allows you to find meaning and practical direction."

Scott thinks a common misconception that Native people worshipped multiple gods, spirits and totems grew out of a naïve transfer of European attitudes.

"What's much more productive is the idea of ubiquitous connection, an attitude of respect and of cultivating relationships with multiple others in the world, which is not quite the same thing as worshipping multiple gods."

Everyone's welcome at this conversation. Even 773-year-old Thomas Aquinas, in *Summa Theologica*, endorsing a commentary on Gentiles following the Law, may offer a key. "Although they have no written law, yet they have the natural law, whereby each one knows, and is conscious of, what is good and what is evil," Aquinas wrote.

Perhaps we're all united in consciousness, however expressed.

"If my faith is the Nishnawbe, or Ojibway, creation story and the spiritual relationship to things in this terri-

tory, how does my faith become your myth?" asks Vern Douglas. "And is your faith my myth? Values of humanity are universal. Sharing, caring, respect and the basic laws in the Ten Commandments, the Koran, the Talmud, Torah or the medicine wheel are common to human beings. It's how you manifest and bring those to life."

Rev. Stewart Folster of Saskatoon, Canada's only active Native Presbyterian minister, understands.

"I think even non-Natives know that there is a spirit world of angels and saints and powerful faith healing by prayer to our one and only God," he wrote in a recent e-mail. "So, why is it so difficult to give those same elements the face of an eagle or a bear or a wolf? I have never prayed to a tree or a rock, not even to a cross. God is more than that. There is no easy way to explain something spiritual meant to be experienced in the sweat lodge or pipe ceremony, no thoughts about who can

help you except the One you pray to."

Bevan Skerratt is a Celtic-Cree, founder of the Urban Aboriginal Medicine Fellowship, singer, writer, holistic psychotherapist and Christian, who has also integrated beliefs from two traditions. "It's not something you can convey through language that evokes an old paradigm," he says of his faith journey. "If one has an experience of expanded consciousness, I think that new linguistic symbols would be part of the creative process of integrating and sharing the experience."

That makes it tough for a writer. Could it be, though, that a glimmer of awareness may lead to some understanding, that insights of another's faith may illuminate my own in the saving grace of Jesus Christ? Wisdom remains distant, but at least we've ventured into the intersection. ■

*Keith Randall is a broadcaster and writer, and ruling elder at The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal.*

**'I think even non-Natives know that there is a spirit world of angels and saints and powerful faith healing by prayer to our one and only God. So, why is it so difficult to give those same elements the face of an eagle or a bear or a wolf?'**

## Truth and reconciliation commissions around the world

**ARGENTINA:** on forced disappearances from 1976-1983

**CANADA:** on residential school victims

**CHILE:** on human rights abuses during Pinochet years

**EL SALVADOR:** a UN commission on violence

**FIJI:** on the coup of 2000

**GHANA:** coming to terms with its post-colonial history

**GUATEMALA:** on its three-decades-long civil war

**LIBERIA:** on human rights violations over 20 years

**MOROCCO:** on Years of Lead

**PANAMA:** 28 years of military regimes

**PERU:** more than 69,000 dead over two years of internal conflict

**SIERRA LEONE:** on its 11-year civil war

**SOUTH AFRICA:** the template for all such commissions, on apartheid

**SOUTH KOREA:** on years of "Japanese imperialism"

**EAST TIMOR:** on human rights violations on all sides from 1974 to 1999

**UNITED STATES:** on Maoist, KKK and neo-Nazi clashes in 1979 in Greensboro

*Source: Wikipedia*



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- **First Presbyterian Church, Portage la Prairie,**  
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# Ministers Mix It Up

Denominational ties are increasingly rare. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

Denominational lines are changing. In recent years, they've become more porous than ever, where people easily move through quickly dissolving boundaries, searching for the right fit. And it's not only members who migrate throughout and within this post-denominational society; ministers are doing the same. This migration may simply be the natural order of things, or it might also be dependent on theological issues, like gay marriage and ordination, or on other very personal reasons.

"It may be a matter of people finding community in a different

way," says Rev. Dr. Harry Oussoren, who handles congregations' health and well-being at the United Church of Canada as its executive minister of congregational, educational and community ministries.

He wonders if denominational lines are even worth keeping in today's society. "With moderate differences, can we afford to be separate communities with all the overhead that entails? Or is there a better way to do mission together?" Oussoren asks. "If there's a bell-ringer in all of this, maybe that's it."

Forty ministers from the Presby-

terian Church have joined the UCC since 1985, while 10 United Church ministers have become Presbyterian since 1990. Some of the influx to the PCC may be due to the United Church's 1988 decision to support gay ordination and ministry, though such reasons for leaving aren't necessarily kept by the church—or at least, not made public. Still, the numbers aren't so large that one would think the Presbyterian Church has been fundamentally changed due to their deflection.

But when considering all of the ministers who have migrated to the





PCC from other denominations and countries, it is reasonable to think that they have influenced the church. In total, since 1990, 216 ministers from other denominations applied to the PCC; 111 were received. Three-quarters of the received ministers came from Reformed Church denominations, with the largest ones being the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa, the Presbyterian Church of Korea, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the UCC. Of the non-Reformed denominations, the most popular are those with Pentecostal and Baptist backgrounds.

Rev. Gordon Haynes, associate secretary for Canada Ministries at the PCC, says we're living in a pluralistic society where congregations are now willing to welcome ministers from another denomination or another country—and the Presbyterian Church is becoming increasingly

multicultural because of it.

"The old denominational and cultural boundaries are not really there anymore," he said. "Is that a bad thing? No. If we didn't have these ministers coming in, we'd have a hard time filling all the positions.

"I don't think we've ever been a church that has provided fully for all the ministers we need," continued Haynes, "and I'd argue that we'd be a poorer church if we didn't have people coming in from elsewhere." Currently there are about 170 vacancies in the PCC's nearly 800 charges. This doesn't

**'I don't think we've ever been a church that has provided fully for all the ministers we need, and I'd argue that we'd be a poorer church if we didn't have people coming in from elsewhere.'**

include temporarily-filled pulpits by supply ministers, interim ministers, lay missionaries, or summer students.

Filling all the pulpits has always been a struggle for the church, says Rev. A. Donald MacLeod, research professor of church history at Tyndale Theological Seminary in Toronto. After church union, when about 80 per cent of clergy left for the United Church, the need became extremely urgent "and there were many imports." Then, during WWII, many clergy became chaplains, and after the war, 130 church extensions in suburban areas caused a clergy shortage in outlying areas. It was anticipated that women would help fill the need when their ordination was allowed in 1966, but family restraints often limited the locations in which they could work.

Throughout the last century the church has welcomed various immigrants. The Irish were amongst the largest group, first during the 1920s, and again after WWII when ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland couldn't find work because of their limited educational background and the surplus of clergy in Northern Ireland. Dutch ministers came over mostly between 1948 and 1951 because of hard times in their home country, though most chose the Christian Reformed Church over

the Presbyterians. Hungarians came in large groups after 1956, and a "huge effort" was made to integrate Reformed church people into the PCC. Finally, South Africans have come into PCC ministry mostly since the end of apartheid in 1990.

"The Irish contingent was very fundamentalist in their ethos," says MacLeod. "Not always clearly theological or Reformed, influenced by the religious culture of the north, particularly its anti-Roman Catholicism. The Dutch provided strong theological ballast for us. The

Hungarians had their own scholarly approach and were highly cultured and intellectual, and politics were always important to them."

More recently, the growing number of Koreans in the PCC have influenced the congregations where they minister. Haynes said more English-speaking congregations are willing to welcome second-generation Koreans to the pulpit; and indeed, more and more are heading in this direction. This is a marked difference from only a decade ago, meaning Korean influence is slowly moving out of the Han-Ca presbytery bounds.

"The next generation will be the test," says MacLeod. "Recent studies suggest that one third of the children of Korean immigrants to North America give up their parents' faith, one third are nominal, and a third retain their parents' vital spirituality and love for the church and for Jesus."

But do migrating ministers have the power to cause bigger changes? Do ministers with pro-gay ordination and pro-same-sex marriage opinions, for example, have the power to change the denomination's current stance against these issues?

"I fear that change is inevitable," said MacLeod. "I use the word 'fear' as I dread the resulting heartbreak of schism. It's a lose/lose situation ➤



for everyone involved, particularly (and ultimately) gays."

Some, like Rev. Douglas duCharme who left for the UCC, says he left the PCC to escape this denomination's

insular, controlled environment to find an open, welcoming United Church that encourages new ideas, new perspectives and new methods of ministry. "Within the United Church, there's room to oppose. There's permission there. They're not afraid."

A minister in the PCC for 20 years, duCharme's work took on many roles, including interim ministry. But he was often frustrated by the workings of the church. "The process often made me want to rip my hair out," he said. "People get hurt because they can't figure out how to work through the restraints of the Presbyterian Church. It kills the spirit."

Rev. Dr. Michael Caveney agrees. After serving the Presbyterian Church for 19 years, he left for a United Church congregation in Victoria, B.C. He was raised in the PCC, and has been at his current post for about five years.

"The migration is due to the incapacity of presbyteries to deal with modern, current, staffing issues," he said. "I have found lots of people working in the UCC who were from the PCC, and I think that very few of them have switched for theological reasons or moved around until they found a place that suited them. Most of them were raised, as I was, as Presbyterians, and left the denomination



for other reasons."

Rev. Will Ingram, minister at St. Andrew's, King St., Toronto, couldn't disagree more and suggests there is a subtext which migrating ministers rarely discuss. "When I hear of people switching there is always a driving reason beneath it they don't want to admit."

The responsibility, he says, is on the ministers to ensure their own success—and the structure is in place to encourage that. "Our system is structured to be collegial and helpful in both pastoral care and clergy success. I think there has to be a lot of conversation about how well clergy set up their own support systems to stay balanced and healthy."

"So much of it is personality-driven," he says, and the reasons are often more personal than institutional.

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need to stay healthy and effective, and therefore, actively serving, is another piece to the puzzle. Of the 31 graduates from Knox College in 1987, for example, only 17 are still in ministry, one has died, two were international students and three were Korean students who were not necessarily destined to ministry in the PCC.

"The bigger question for me is not whether ministers are leaving the Presbyterian Church for the United Church," said Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon, principal at Knox College, "but our ability to sustain ministers throughout their career at various stages. How do we find the resources they need to sustain their work?"

Gordon said colleges can partner with congregations to help bolster the shortage of ministers. "We used to have a system where young people gathered and leadership challenged them to think about how God could use them. It's still there, but it's skeletal.

"So who then will challenge them?" she asks. "No one in the guidance office at high school will ask a young person about going into ministry. It has to come from the congregations. They need to be challenged to look at young people and say, 'I wonder where God is calling you,' and give them something to think about."

Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris, dean of St. Andrew's Hall in Vancouver, agrees. "One of the traditional roles of ministers and sessions is to identify and to encourage candidates for ministry. Perhaps they need to be reminded gently of this responsibility."

Rev. Dr. John Vissers, principal at Presbyterian College, Montreal, wonders if the issue isn't just a little bigger than that: "Are the so-called mainline Protestant churches increasingly being looked upon as one shrinking entity, and will there be more traffic among them as a result? Is there an ecclesial and religious realignment taking place in Canadian society? From the perspective of theological education, has our commitment to ecumenical theological education always served us well?" ■

## Wills that Changed the World

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# A True Church

Perfection waits for heaven and the renewal of all things.

BY CALVIN BROWN

**I** Believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins...'

In the last number of years, our church has taken to asking for forgiveness from those we have harmed. The greatest amount of time, energy, and money (millions of dollars) has been dedicated to Aborigines whom we as a church have taken responsibility for harming through our lack of discernment in seeing that what we were doing was wrong.

We simply let our confidence in our government and societal mores determine what was acceptable to us as church. I suspect some of the things we are doing now will have the same judgement of history on us in the future. One thing for sure we need to ask forgiveness for is all

**Many, many people have left our church or are on the verge of leaving, not because there is conflict but because we have not addressed the conflict as Christians should**

the people we in the church have wounded and in fact whose souls we have put in jeopardy by our often arrogant and callous dealing with them. We have sometimes been accused of "eating our own kind." It grieves me, as I watch the actions of congregations, presbyteries and other courts of our church at times of disagreement, that there is so often a lack of grace and mercy. Some say the court system itself is set up to create winners and losers instead of a win/win solution and at times I have observed this to be true. In congregational conflict, people go ballistic in their vitriolic attacks without the faith community holding them in check. This is a serious failure for us as Christians in community. Sometimes it is only the fear of civil lawsuits that seems to restrain us at all. This is not what I believe church should be. This is not what Jesus would do.

What can be done to work for reconciliation?

It is not what was common a few decades ago when there was a conspiracy of silence and issues were hidden under the table so there was a facade of everything being fine. It is also not an expanded *Book of Forms* with more rules and regulations. It is instead, I believe, a matter of renewed hearts and minds in the church. It is having the boldness and courage to forgive those who treat us

shamefully and to turn the other cheek. It is even to be so gracious (some would say crazy) as to give the benefit of the doubt to believe that maybe our enemies (those who have wounded us to the core) can change and perhaps on reflection even acknowledge that what they said or did was not what Jesus would have wanted. It is to believe that the power of God is so great that even prodigals can be given another chance. This will cost us both as individuals and as church communities—it is risk-taking—it is acting in faith! It will cost us more than money; it will cost us time and emotional energy. Time taken as a community together to learn how to behave in times of conflict. Time to be in earnest prayer so we can truly discern the spiritual issues and address them openly. Time taken to work closely with those wounded and those who have wounded them. Time to commit to symbols and actions of reconciliation.

Many, many people have left our church or are on the verge of leaving, not because there is conflict but because we have not addressed the conflict as Christians should. Many are not willing to pay the price anymore of hanging in there when the outcome is not often one that demonstrates an amazing love but is only a compromise that gets us one more period of armed peace. Being a true church will cost—it always has. I pray we will be willing to pay the price and that we will be willing to press on for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus as Paul urges us in scripture.

A few years ago in the midst of the sex scandals, the Roman Catholic church had a campaign urging those who had left to return to their home church—to be reconciled again with the faith community.

Perhaps we should have a similar campaign to invite those whom we have wounded to come home again. Perhaps it needs to begin with a confession and an apology. I am not so naive as to think everything will then be perfect. Perfection waits for heaven and the renewal of all things, as Jesus says, but at least for the spiritually discerning we would be one more step along the way. ■

*Rev. Calvin Brown is the executive director of the Renewal Fellowship within the PCC.*





# One Day at a Time

The Sermon on the Mount tells us who we are.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

*May 25: Matthew 6: 24-34*

**W**e imagine Jesus, standing on a hilltop, broadcasting instructions to a throng of followers. Matthew says, "When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him." (5:1) Jesus preaches to a congregation of twelve. Let's imagine Jesus didn't leave the crowds behind. Picture an audience who listen in over the shoulders of Peter and his friends. This is Matthew's way of leaping over the first people who heard Jesus, to the church he wrote his Gospel for. That includes you and me. Don't forget that original audience, Jesus' inner circle. These words are instructions for people who have already thrown their whole life in with Jesus. The Sermon on the Mount isn't a collection of wise watchwords for anyone and everyone, bolstered by parallels in the teaching of other faiths. It's a hard-core call to insiders, the people who know who Jesus is.

For Matthew, Jesus teaching on the mountain is a new Moses. Some scholars see Matthew's Gospel falling into five "books," just like the Old Testament Books of Moses. The disciples are the 12 men who will go on to form a renewed covenant people. The Sermon on the Mount is like a new set of commandments for the household Jesus gathers around himself.

Today's Gospel isn't a call to cast off all care. We who overhear these words

often think that. In a world of rising oil prices, shrinking pension funds, climate change ... who can live up to Jesus' high ideal?

Jesus' words call us to stop worrying about the wrong things. To care about the right things. To focus, first, on the one thing that never changes. "Look!" says Jesus. Focus! Single vision, zeroed-in on what God wants us to see. The birds on the branches. The long grass, moving with the wind. Look and see God's care. How God has taken care to make the simplest things beautiful.

Remember who we are! Created in God's image. God's covenant partners. Friends of Jesus. Won't God take care of us? Stop acting like people who don't yet know what we now know of God, through Jesus.

Now, "strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness ..." (33) There's the call to care about the right things. Even to worry a little. Worry that leads to action, because the fear that feeds the wrong kind of worry is gone. If we really believe God cares and provides, want and change can't scare us. We may still worry we won't be able to respond to God's call, or live up to God's righteousness. The only way to find out is to try!

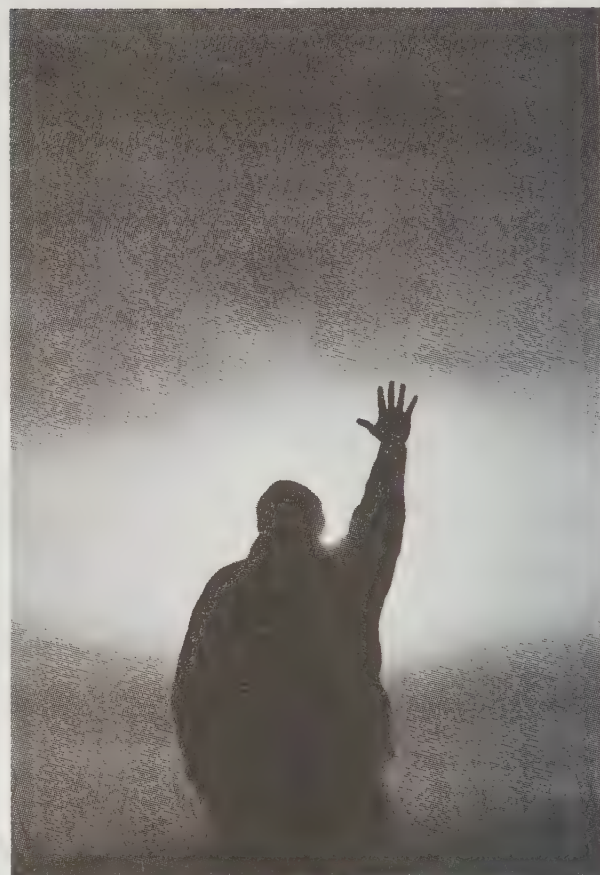
The last part of verse 33 can lead to all manner of distortions, including the Prosperity Gospel. We might think Jesus means, "Put God and righteous-

ness first, and we'll get everything we want." Or at least everything we need. In that formulation "righteousness" is well defined as a very strict personal morality that's beyond the reach of most people. And a brand of politics that serves the already-fortunate few. I wish Jesus had said, "all these things will fall into place!" Not, "all these things will be given to you as well."

Jesus is talking about God's order. A lot of "these things" won't belong there. Some things we won't even care for when we find the right focus, and try to put first things first. Bring in verse 34, and remember the prayer that comes just a little earlier in the Sermon on the Mount. Don't forget Jesus' first disciples never imagined the wealth and over-abundance we take for granted. "All these things" meant enough to meet the true needs of each day. One day at a time.

Sometimes we give up striving for the kingdom. We think we have to bring it to the world all at once. But the reign of God comes closer one day at a time. ■

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe lives in Halifax.*







# Children Matter

More and more congregations have no Sunday school. BY PETER BUSH

My interest was piqued by the Education for Discipleship report to General Assembly. The report noted that nearly 20 per cent of congregations in the Presbyterian Church had no Sunday school in 2005. In 2006, 164 out of 932 congregations (reporting statistics) were in that situation. This suggests that Presbyterians are not reaching the next generation of Canadians.

Some people, however, have argued what the data actually show is that the widely used model of Sunday school is finished as an effective tool for reaching children with the good news. "Effective contemporary churches are still reaching children, initiating them into the faith, just not through Sunday school," is the reasoning.

The question became: How to test the argument that children and young people are still being initiated into the church through Presbyterian congregations? I decided to look at baptisms.

Baptism is, among other things, an initiation into the church. Whether it is parents bringing children to be baptized, or people publicly professing their faith as adults and being baptized, in the waters of baptism people are welcomed into the church. Therefore, it is worth asking how many people are being baptized in Presbyterian congregations in Canada.

From the late 1980s to 1993, an average of 5,500 people were baptized each year in Canadian Presbyterian churches. Since that time there has been a steady decline in the number of baptisms. In 2006, 2,461 people were baptized; less than half the number 15 years earlier.

In 2006, 36 per cent of the Presbyterian congregations in the country (331 of 932 congregations reporting) did no baptisms at all; an almost 50 per cent increase from the 229 congregations who in 1992 did not celebrate any baptisms (23 per cent of 984 congre-

gations reporting). In short, Canadian Presbyterians are initiating ever fewer people into the faith either as infants, young people or adults.

Over the last 15 years, the number of congregations in the Presbyterian Church has declined, as has the denomination's membership, the number of children in Sunday school and the number of households under pastoral care. Yet none of those declines has been as precipitous as the collapse in the number of baptisms celebrated.

A possible explanation would be: "Canada has a declining birth rate, therefore it is to be expected that there would be fewer baptisms in 2006 than in 1992." Thanks to Statistics Canada we can evaluate this explanation. The average number of births in Canada per year in the first half of the 1990s was 316,000. That figure dipped to an average of 282,000 births a year in the second half of the 1990s. There has, however, been a significant rebound in the ➤

birth rate over the first five years of the new millennium. Between July 1, 2005, to June 30, 2006, 343,517 babies were born in Canada—the highest number in 15 years. The declining number of baptisms cannot be explained by the falling birth rate, for the birth rate has been on the upswing for the last five years. It would be so simple if the decline in baptisms could be explained by something external to the Presbyterian Church. But the evidence does not allow for such simple answers.

Having asked how many congregations had no Sunday schools, and how many congregations initiated no one into the church through baptism, it seemed reasonable to ask how many congregations lacked both Sunday school and baptisms in 2006. The answer is 99 of the 932 congregations reporting (10.6 per cent). Put another way: 60 per cent of congregations that had no Sunday school in 2006 also performed no baptisms. If a church does not have a Sunday school, it is likely it will not get the chance to celebrate baptisms.

In 1992, there were 76 Presbyterian congregations that celebrated no baptisms and had no Sunday school. Tracking those 76 congregations, I discovered that 28 were closed by 2006. The sobering fact is that 36.8 per cent of congregations with no Sunday school and celebrating no baptisms were closed within 15 years. The evidence is compelling: congregations that did not reach children and their families with the good news of Jesus

had difficulty maintaining ministry of any kind. Put positively: having a ministry to children is one of the most effective ways of maintaining the life of a community of faith.

Congregations that expect children to be part of their faith community find that children attend Sunday

## **The evidence is compelling: congregations that did not reach children and their families with the good news of Jesus had difficulty maintaining ministry of any kind**

school and church; congregations that do not expect children to attend church find their expectations fulfilled: no children come.

Let me illustrate this: A small rural congregation has four children connected to it. Some Sundays the children are there, other Sundays they are not. Yet each week a woman in the congregation faithfully prepares to teach Sunday school not knowing whether this week there will be children or not. She lives in expectation there will be kids, and whenever they come they receive a welcome.

At another congregation, a new young family came to church one Sunday. The mother was shown the nursery space and was invited to stay there and provide childcare for her youngest child while the worship service took place. No one in the congregation was prepared to respond to these children and their family. Needless to say, that family did not go to that church again.

Congregations that do not touch the

lives of children are at risk of closing. Congregational leaders and members need to trust God to send children to their congregation and then do everything they can to welcome and nurture those children and their families.

There is a glimmer of hope in the tale of woe. Among the 76 congrega-

tions that had no Sunday school and celebrated no baptisms in 1992 were: Woodbridge, north of Toronto, and Guthrie, near Barrie, Ont. Both these congregations are thriving today, albeit with different names. Woodbridge is now Cornerstone Community Church and Guthrie was one of the three congregations that joined together to form Trinity Community Church, Oro.

The fact that these two congregations had no children in Sunday school and celebrated no baptisms, and yet have been able to find new life, holds out the hope that turnaround is possible. The members of these congregations will bear witness that turnaround requires congregations doing new things, thinking in new ways, and moving outside of the safe confines of known patterns of congregational life.

While it is not necessary for congregations to imitate Trinity or Cornerstone to reach the next generation with the good news, reaching the next generation will require significant changes in the life of the congregation and in the thinking of church members. Congregations and their members may be afraid to change or unwilling to change. Yet the data indicate that congregations which do not reach the next generation with the good news are making a choice which will likely end with their congregation's closure. The good news is that congregations ready to minister to children and families can find new life in their midst, and in their numbers! ■

*Rev. Peter Bush is a minister at Westwood, Winnipeg. This article is part of an ongoing series.*

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# Dying Young

We need to centre our thoughts on things that are pure and lovely.

BY PHIL CALLAWAY

**M**y mother is in a nursing home and the doctor just gave her six months to live. But when he found out she couldn't pay her bill, he gave her another year. Last night after spending some time with her, the thought hit me: If I stay in peak physical condition, I will live long enough to be a drain on the medical system. And so I have uncovered three ways to ensure this does not happen.

1. Change your diet and exercise habits. I exercised for the last time today. Retired my sneakers. My light weights. The resolve began when an acquaintance of mine dropped dead of a heart attack. When I thought of the last time I saw him alive, how he was waddling over to the Twinkies aisle in the supermarket, it hit me like a runaway grocery cart: die eating.

And so tonight we will order out for pizza. And Chinese food. Besides, if God had wanted us to lift weights, He'd have made our arms heavier. And if I develop flabby thighs, it's not a problem. My stomach will cover them.

2. Have more children. Children are messy and won't let you sleep a wink. Having children is like installing a NASCAR track in your head. Besides, the average male child costs roughly \$3.4 million (in Lego alone) by the time he is eight, and you can double that if you have a darling little girl who steals your heart. Oh sure, they start out cuddly and they giggle, but don't be fooled. They are here with one thing in mind: getting you off the planet.

Grownups have always been suspicious of children. I realized this when I was very small. They covered my crib

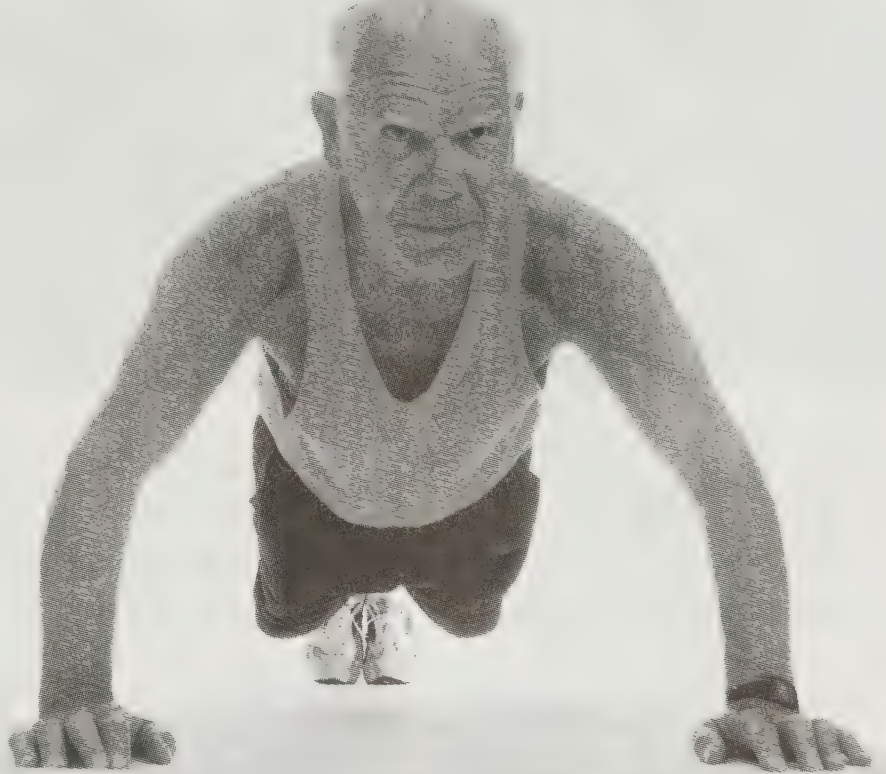
with lead-based paints. They encouraged us to ride in the back of pickups or build our own go-carts and parachutes. We ate worms and mud pies. We played with BB guns and smashed rocks with a hammer and no goggles.

I was just a wee little kid when they encouraged me to play ice hockey. They strapped blades on my feet, handed me a sharp stick and something called a puck. They pushed me out on the ice, then stood behind plywood sheets and wire mesh to see what happened. When we started having too much fun, they'd yell, "Kill him! Kill him!" I knew what they wanted. They wanted me dead. They knew I was a threat to a long and peaceful life.

3. Travel to exotic places. I recommend a honeymoon in Iraq or cycling from Beirut to Jerusalem. Pack light.

Okay, I've been joking and hoping all the while that you wouldn't write me a letter before you read the conclusion.

Here it is: I want to die young ... as old as I can.



I think we stay young by keeping our sense of humour intact. By not wasting time listening to gossip. By eating ice cream nine times a week. By inviting friends over to dinner even if the carpet is stained and the sofa faded.

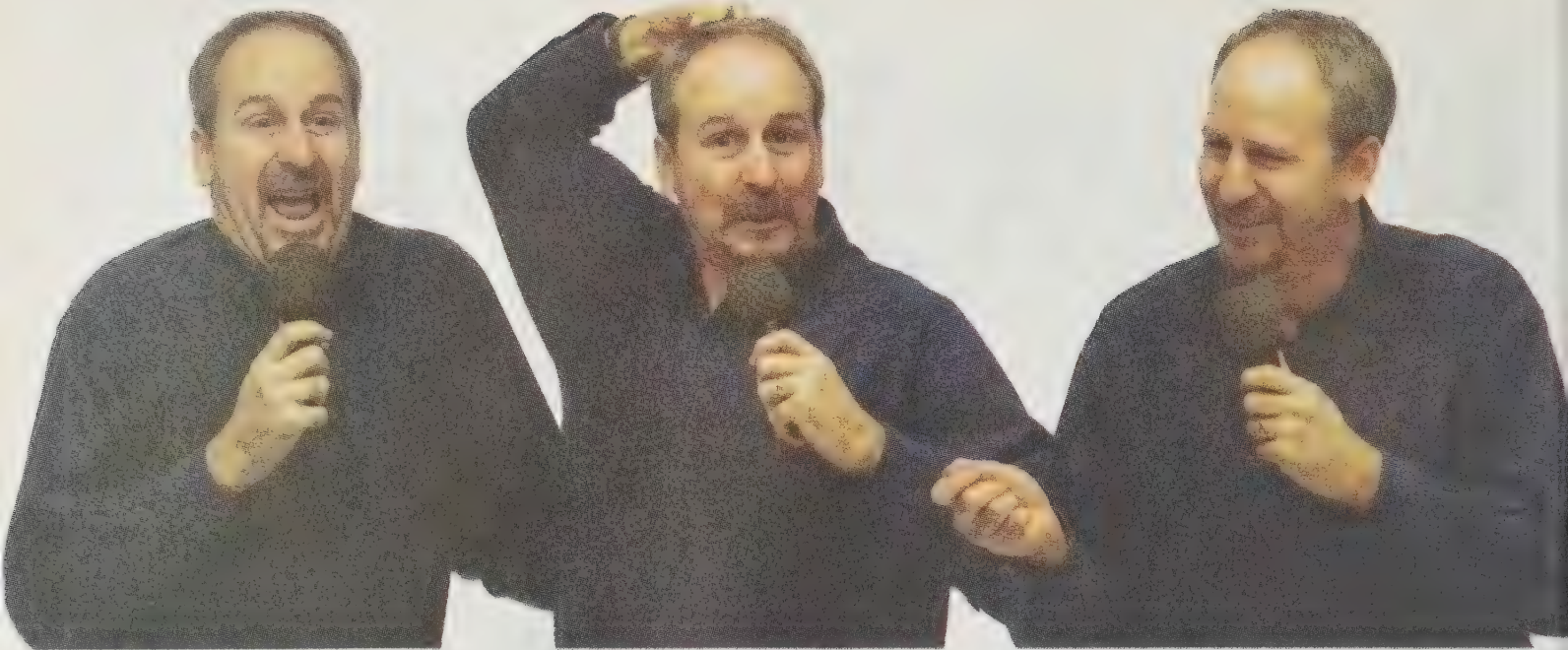
I think we stay young by centering our thoughts on things that are pure, lovely, and of good report. By putting our arms out car windows more often. By burning expensive candles before they melt in storage. By getting so excited about the love of Jesus that our teeth can barely keep up with our mouth.

So tomorrow morning I think I'll pull out those sneakers and the light weights and the alfalfa sprouts.

You'll be happy to know that we've decided against having more children anytime soon. At least until we find a nursing home with a kindergarten attached. ■

*Phil Callaway is an award-winning author and international speaker. Visit him online at [www.laughagain.org](http://www.laughagain.org)*





# The Likes of Him

Phil Callaway is thankful for God's love. BY EMILY WIERENGA

**P**resbyterian Record readers are familiar with Phil Callaway and now so are American soldiers. The U.S. Army has purchased 30,000 copies of Callaway's *Be Kind, Be Friendly, Be Thankful*, a children's book about two best friends who are forced to say goodbye and the lessons they subsequently learn.

"I was expecting this about as much as I expected my high school sweetheart to marry me," says Callaway. Nevertheless, as readers of this publication know, she did.

"Military families are taxed to the max when it comes to saying goodbye, so a book like this is geared to help them through that."

While he cannot write "Jesus loves you! If you need to know more, call my home number" in large letters across the pages as he wishes to, Callaway still hopes to breathe faith into his young readers.

"I wrote about three things children need to do when tough times come, and the final one is to be thankful. A prerequisite to being thankful is to have someone to thank,

and I pray the kids will find Him."

Despite speaking 100 times each year, Callaway is a devoted family man, who says he's happiest when he's home in Three Hills, Alta., with his wife, Ramona, and their three children.

**'I do what I do because I see the joy it brings to others and because I believe it is the call of God on my life'**

It saddens him to see the state of families today. "I don't think we've ever had more children saying goodbye than we do nowadays. I wanted to write something that would teach children how to turn even this into joy."

The latter forms the basis for everything Callaway does. "I do what I do because I see the joy it brings to others and because I believe it is the call of God on my life," he says. "Yes, I get tired, and much of my writing has been about things I'm trying to practice: like slowing down, and learning to trust when your wife

has epilepsy or your parents have Alzheimer's."

Life has no doubt spun out its hard balls for Callaway (not referring to his days in minor league). In such moments, Callaway leans on faith and his "warped mind," both of which were nurtured in him as a child.

"I accepted Jesus Christ when I was knee-high to a Doberman," says Callaway. "I think my brother told me I was going to hell, so I told my mom and she fixed both of us."

Not only did she fix it for him then; it's his mother's faith, Callaway says, that has kept him on the straight and narrow. "No atheist has ever been able to explain my mother's life, so I'll stick by my mother's God," he says.

"God has given me strength when I'm weak, joy when I should feel only sorrow, and an abiding peace that hasn't gone away. I can't tell you this without laughing, because I'm so thankful that a holy God loves the likes of me. It's the greatest punch line in all of history." ■



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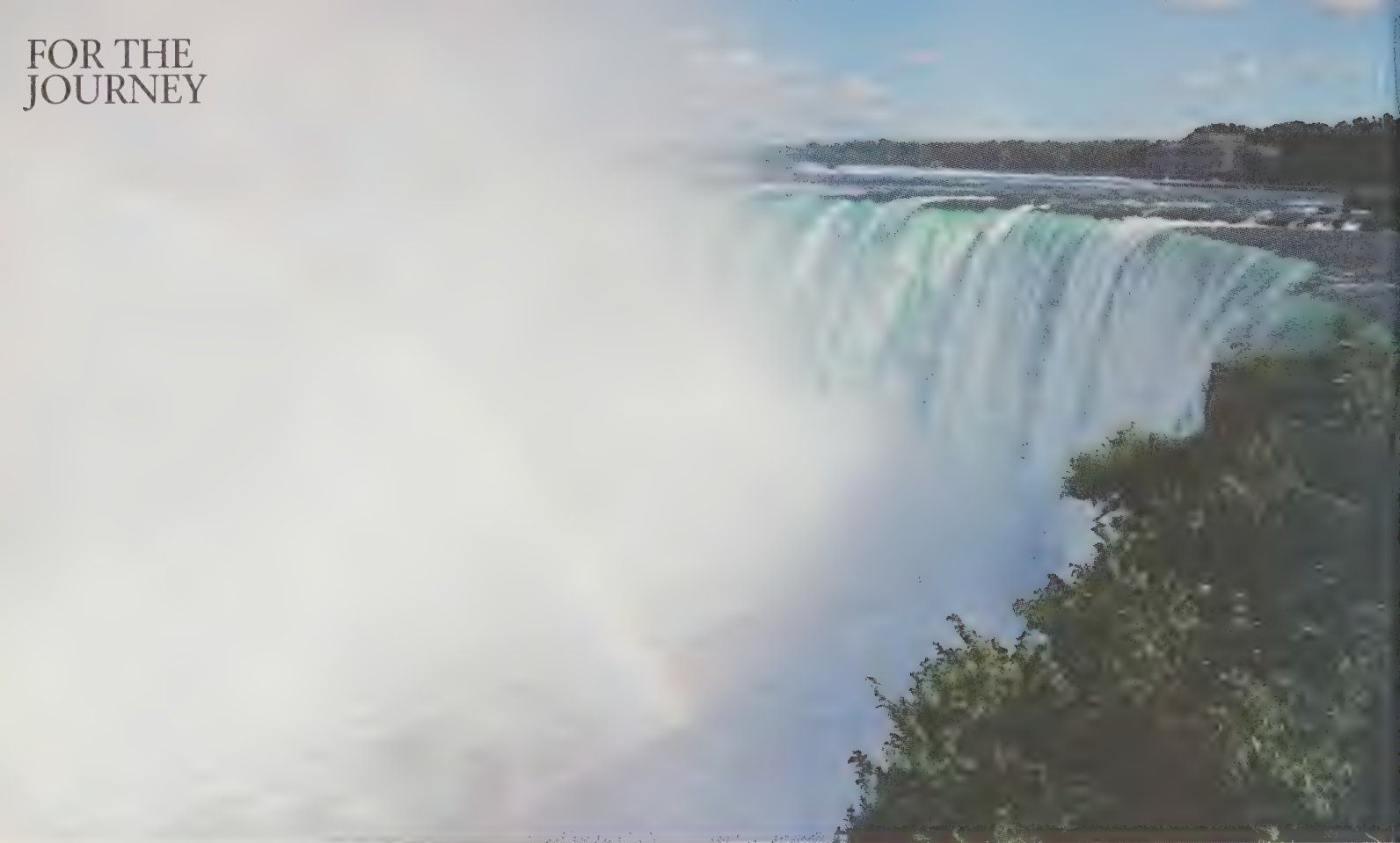
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# Up Close and Personal

With God kept at a distance, all the stuff of a prideful, egocentric life is safe.

BY DAVID WEBBER

I am not one prone to enjoy what I consider the trashy touristy things in life, so it was with a real sense of reluctance that I agreed to visit there at all. However, She Who Must be Obeyed (both of them) insisted that we take the time during our Ontario deputation tour to visit Niagara Falls.

We found a parking lot three or four blocks uptown from the walkway that goes along the river towards the falls. This necessitated a stroll through downtown Niagara, the real trashy touristy part. I was filled with cynical and critical comments like, "See, I told ya so!" as we walked past wax museums, theatres, casinos, restaurants and horror houses, all dedicated to lifting the dollars out of tourists' pockets. Bud, our Lab, wasn't impressed either.

He growled at one grotesque figure at the door of a house of horror and then cocked his leg on it. "Good dog!" I said, feeling he had spoken well for both of us.

Finally, we got down to the walkway that winds along the Niagara River towards the Canadian Horseshoe Falls. At first I could see them in the distance. "They are bordering upon pretty," I conceded, as we got closer. The girls insisted that we push on. Bud and I relented.

Soon we were about 400 metres from the Horseshoe Falls. Yes, they were pretty, but no more, really. I was ready to get on with our journey to St. Catharines, and said so. The girls insisted upon walking closer. Reluctantly I followed. "What a waste of

time," I whined. "We've seen the falls, let's get on with the business of the day."

By the time we were within 100 metres, I was still pretty much thinking in terms of the words of that great Canadian bard, Shania Twain: "This don't impress me much." Linda and Chelsea insisted that we walk right up to the head of the Horseshoe Falls, the edge, the crest. Bud and me, well we didn't have much choice, both being on leashes of one kind or another. And so we walked up the sidewalk to the very crest of the Horseshoe Falls, to the railing right at the leading edge. Here, the mighty Niagara River was slipping off into oblivion right under our toes.

At this point, as to Niagara Falls, I had what I could best describe as a



conversion experience. My whole perspective changed. Standing at the very edge of the Horseshoe Falls with the enormous volume of water of the massive Niagara River (6 million cubic feet per minute actually) cascading 18 storeys over the crest right below my toes overwhelmed me. Standing at the very edge and looking out around the crestline of their incredible full horseshoe shape, the sheer length and breadth and size of the falls left me awestruck. (The crestline of the Canadian falls is approximately 670 metres, or 2,200 feet, long.) Standing at the very edge and hearing the tumultuous roar of the water as it races over the falls at about 112 kilometres per hour, experiencing the earth rumble beneath my feet as the force carved out a plunge pool that is as deep as the falls are high (56 metres), feeling the spray pouring off my cowboy hat, nose and face; well, there is no way to put it but to say that it overpowered me.

You can only get this perspective of the Niagara Falls up close and personal. Up close and personal with Canadian Horseshoe Falls at Niagara, all the trashy tourism in the streets of the human city a few blocks away was erased for me. All of the distractions of the horses and carriages and sightseeing buses and tour boats and helicopter flights buzzing over and around the falls; all this stuff going on around me seemed to vanish. All of the mere prettiness of the falls that I saw as I walked up to them and viewed them from a distance evaporated. And I was left to contend with the sheer raw power and glory and majesty and terrible beauty of the falls, in what I can only describe as a personal encounter. As to the falls, I was converted, at some level even changed. I left my complacency and my cynicism and my critical spirit there at the leading edge of the falls.

Bud and me, we stood there for what must have been a half hour or so, almost unable to pull ourselves away, both of us getting soaked through and through with the power and majesty and the icy blast of spray, while the

girls went into the gift shop across the lot and purchased souvenirs. Personally, I had no need of any; none would suffice as a token for what I had experienced.

Later as I silently drove us out of the city of Niagara heading for St. Catharines, I could not help but allegorically compare my experience of Niagara Falls with my experience of God. Kept at a distance, God seems attractive, even pretty, but I am easily distracted from Him by the trashy parts of my life. Kept at a distance, God seems almost overpowered by all the stuff on the streets of my life. Kept at a distance, my complacency, cynicism and critical spirit, all the stuff of a prideful, egocentric life, is safe from God. Kept at a distance, I know I won't be changed much by Him. I think that's why God refuses to be kept at a distance. God becomes flesh and dwells with me and yells into my face in the language of two Testaments: "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." (Jm. 4:8, see also Zech. 1:3 and Mal. 3:7) And in the language of two Testaments, the promise is that drawing near to God, in all His power and majesty and glory, will convert and cleanse and change me. And God knows, I need to be converted, cleansed and changed, not just once in my life, but daily.

And as I drove away from Niagara Falls I became convinced, in a way that I have never been convinced before, of how much I need to make a daily walk to stand right before God, right at the edge of His throne. For me, the way of doing this is so simple and biblical. It has to do with being still and being silent and being alone before God. It has to do with taking a moment, about a half hour a day, and obeying God's command to "Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth." Indeed, as the Psalmist concludes, "The Lord of hosts is with us ..." (Ps. 46:10-11b) ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry.*



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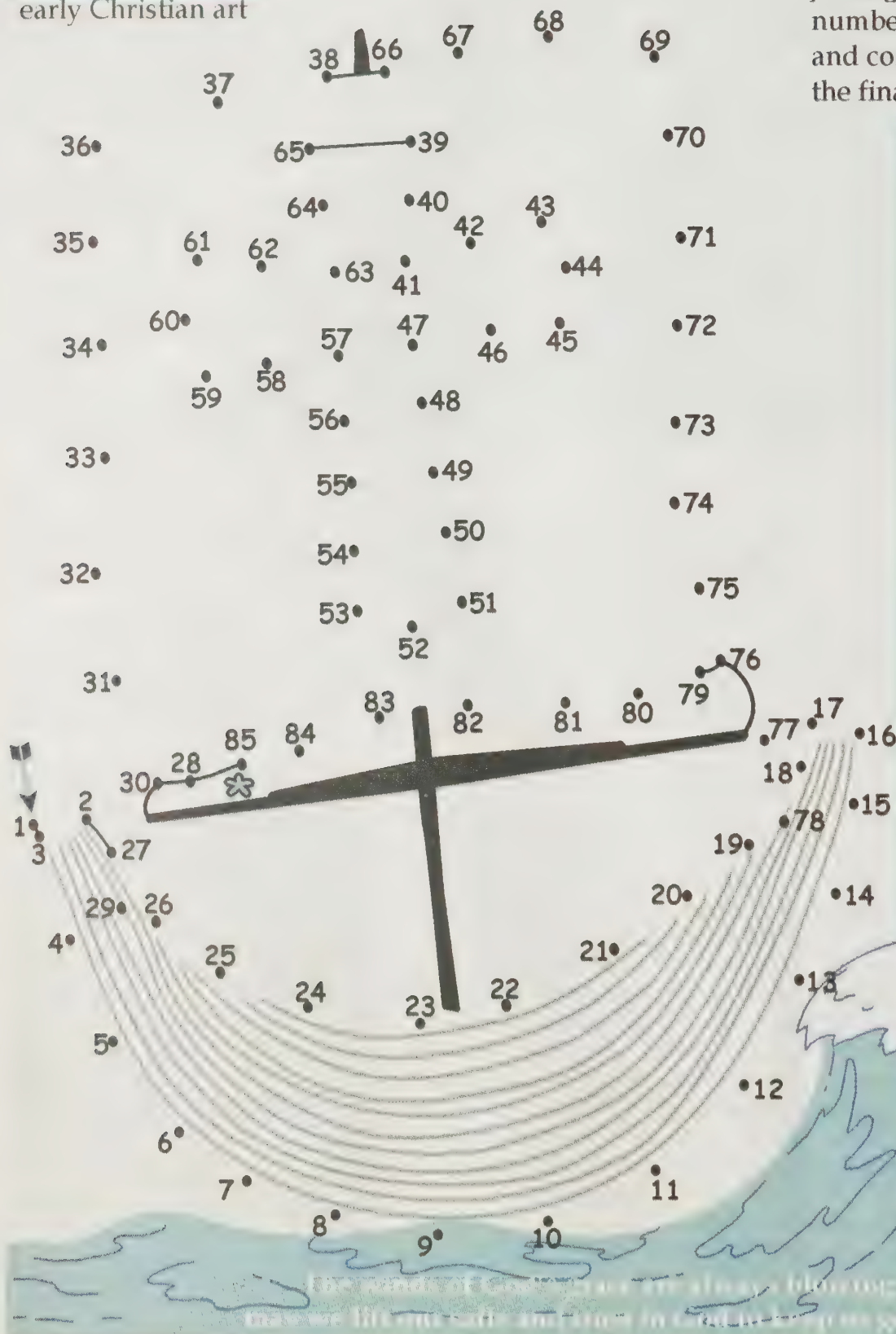


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(Genesis:  
chapters 7 and 8)

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(Jonah:  
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boat as pulpit  
(Mark 4: 1-9)

boat as sanctuary  
(Mark 3: 9-10 and  
Matthew 14: 13-14)

a boat in a storm  
(Matthew 8: 23-27)

fishermen

become disciples  
(Luke 5: 1-11)

disciples in a boat  
(Matthew 14: 22-33  
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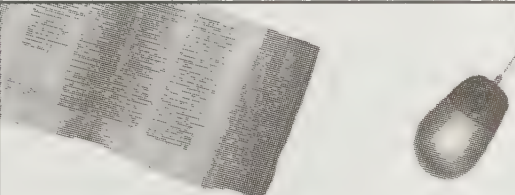
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## Obituaries

**SIM**, Enid, long-time member of Rockwood Presbyterian Church, passed away Nov. 14, 2007. Enid served for many

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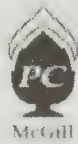
years at various positions in WMS and received her life membership to that group in 1978. Becoming an elder in 1990, Enid served actively for 13 years. Enid's quiet, caring service within our congregation for many years is recognized and appreciated.

**SKELLY, William**, passed away on Nov. 4, 2007, in Mississauga, Ont., at the age of 87. Bill was born in Dromore, County Down, Northern Ireland, "so he could be close to his mother." He was a bright student and scholarships enabled him to study at Trinity College Dublin, the Universities of Edinburgh and Belfast. He was ordained in April 1943.

He met his wife, Mary Anderson, in his first appointment in the rural parish of Anaclyone where she was the organist. He was then called to Ballyarnett, near Londonderry, where they were blessed with two children, Bob and Francis. After seven years he received a call to Drayton, Moorefield and Rothsay, Ont., (1952-54) where they had two more children, Joy and Brenda. Then he moved on to St. Andrew's, Thorold, Ont., (1954-61) Alexandra in Brantford, Ont., (1962-69) Scottlea and St. David's (1969-70), Tillsonburg and Windham Centre (1970-76) and Knox Dunnville, Ont. (1976-85). He retired in March 1985 and lived in St. Catharines, Ont., until moving to the Sunrise Retirement Residence in Mississauga for the final 18 months of his life.

He was predeceased by his loving wife Mary in March 2006. He had a strong, unfaltering faith and was a generous, kind and gentle man with a good sense of humour. He had a selfless manner and never refused someone in need, yet was humble in charity. He will be greatly missed. Well done, good and faithful servant. We commend you into the arms of the Lord and to the joys of the eternal Kingdom.

**TYRRELL, Jack**, died Nov. 4, 2007, in his 81st year. He was an elder at St. Andrew's, Scarborough, Ont., for 42 years and is survived by his wife of 59 years, Mildred Tyrrell. He will be missed greatly as Jack served faithfully, energetically in so many areas of our church. ■



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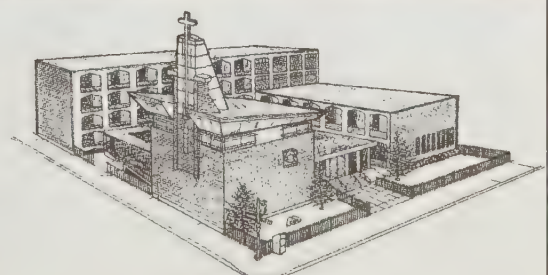
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# Contagious Christians

Fellowship makes community out of committees. BY REV. DR. J. H. HANS KOUWENBERG



**T**he number one passage in the Bible that has been a substratum for my vision of ministry has been Acts 2:42-47. Here is how Eugene Peterson renders it in *The Message*:

*They committed themselves to the teaching of the apostles, the life together, the common meal, and the prayers. Everyone was in awe—all these wonders and signs done through the apostles! And the believers lived in a wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person's need was met.*

They followed a daily discipline of worship in the Temple followed by meals at home, every meal a celebration, exuberant and joyful, as they praised God. People in general liked what they saw. Every day their number grew as God added to those who were saved.

There is something about the life of the early church—its commitment to God in Christ, to Christian truth and to each other that takes one's breath away.

Leonard Sweet calls the Acts 2:42-47 church "an MRI church." A Magnetic Resonating Image machine sees inside the human body in a deeper and more detailed way than an X-ray or even a CAT-scan machine can do. In the same way this passage lets us see most deeply into the nature and the power of the Christian church. This

church is missional—what happens in this church has a natural outreaching, missional quality about it. It does not exist for itself. It exists for the community and for the world in which it finds itself. This church is relational—people really care for one another. They show this care in all sorts of practical ways. And this church is incarnational—it embodies the life of our Lord. I guess that's why people wanted to belong to this church.

One way I've discovered something of the warmth and love and contagious Christian power of the early church is in small groups. Wherever I've ministered I've tried to encourage the formation of a number of small groups within the congregation: whether they be neighbourhood Bible study groups, women's or men's Bible studies, home fellowship groups, growth groups or care groups. It doesn't matter what one calls them. But there is a decided focus, usually to study the Bible, although there can also be other purposes for such groups such as marriage enrichment, book club or community justice issues. Someone is passionate about starting such a group and begins to recruit people individually, personally. The group commits itself to meet weekly or biweekly and arrange other details of meeting and life together. A small group is best comprised of no more than a dozen people.

I've found there must be four basic elements to any successful holistic small group: There will be some time for worship. Perhaps it will only be an opening prayer, or some prayer for each other at the end of the time of meeting. There will be some time for study—of the Bible, or of the other issue the group wishes to engage. There ought

to be some ice-breaking questions that give people permission to share before you dig down deeper into the passage you are studying. And everybody ought to be able to participate. There will be some time for community-building. Hospitality and getting to know and care for one another is an essential element of the group. The beauty of a small group is that it is truly a place where everybody knows your name. As a result genuine pastoral care can take place within the group. And there will be some focus on evangelism or outreach. There must be a sense that this group is not just an 'in' group; it does not just exist for itself. Participants, especially the leader, must wish to draw others in and so the group will be ready to reproduce when the opportunity presents itself.


All kinds of resources are available for this kind of group. Intervarsity Christian Fellowship and Shaw Publishers, as well as a number of churches that specialize in small groups, like Willow Creek, publish the kind of material that can help you get started. Roberta Hestenes who taught me everything I know about small groups has an excellent resource *Using the Bible in Groups*.

The bottom line is this: once you have enjoyed the down-to-earth input, laughter, tears, togetherness and the power of such a small group you will even want to begin making committees into communities! ■

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. H. Kouwenberg".

Rev. Dr. J. H. (Hans) Kouwenberg  
Moderator of the 133rd General Assembly  
The Presbyterian Church in Canada



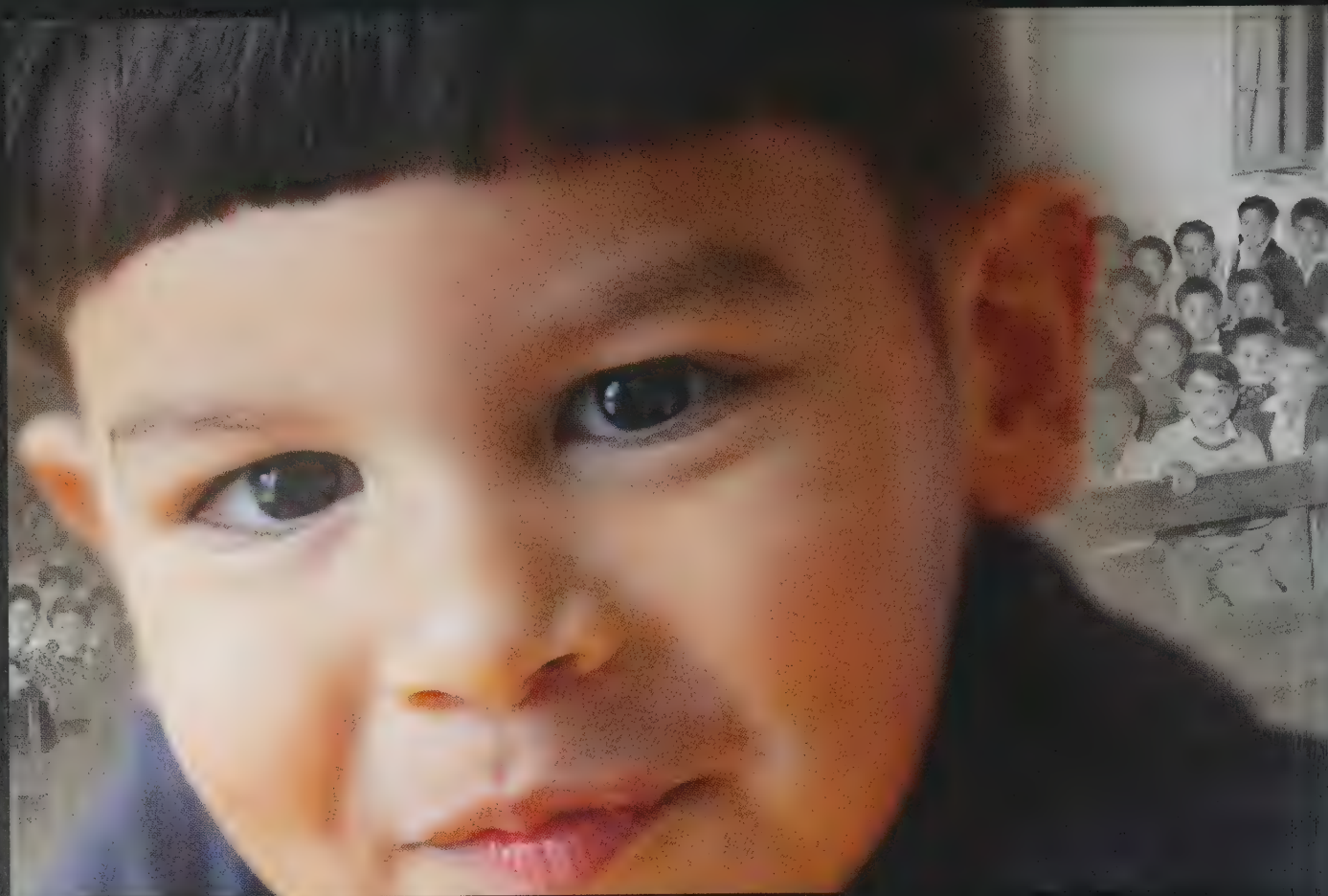
A photograph showing two people, a woman in the foreground and a man in the background, both wearing glasses and singing from an open hymn book. The woman is looking down at the book, and the man is looking slightly to the side. The background is blurred, suggesting an indoor setting like a church or a retreat center.

Sybil Mosley, student at Presbyterian College, Montreal, and George Yen, elder at Vancouver Taiwanese, join in a traditional Scottish Gaelic melody.

**"We, representatives of diverse racial and ethnic groups and members of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, met at Crieff Hills Retreat Centre from April 4-6, 2008, under the auspices of Justice Ministries. We met at a time when the demographic profile of Canada is rapidly changing and reflects our church in the same way it does the country. We ask prayerfully to have a legitimate, fully-resourced structure within the rubric of the Life and Mission Agency to address our concerns about racial and ethnic relations within our congregations, our sessions, our presbyteries and at the national level."**

A statement drafted by Anu Bose, Sybil Mosley, Yaw Nyampong, Saw Winning and Michael Yen reflecting the intent of the participants at the end of the conference.





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# PRESBYTERIAN Record

## reading theology

Not your typical  
Summer book list...







May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will. Hebrews 13:20,21



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# Reading Theology

Not-so-light reading for the Summer Book Club

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# GRASPING THEOLOGY

Increasingly more Christians want to go deeper in their faith. BY DAVID HARRIS

Let's be honest, this issue does not have a light summer reading list! There are two things one can say about that. One is that if we don't highlight some of these books for you, we're pretty sure no one else will. The other is that there is increasing evidence that mainline Christians are looking to go deeper in their faith—and that ultimately means exploring theology.

Because whether it's ultimately spending more time with scripture or with contemporary spirituality, some exploration and grasp of theology is crucial because it gives one the means to assess various points of view and to understand better where a particular author is coming from.

The trouble with theology these days is that it is perceived by clergy and laity alike to be either inscrutably inaccessible (masquerading as deep or academic) or vacuous, like some recent books highlighted in the media suggesting warm feelings to the left of Svend Robinson are as religious as anyone should be.

Good theology is neither. At its heart, theology is the articulation about how we conceive of God. That happens every time we pray, for instance. How we view God, whether as a judge to be feared, as a disciplinary parent, as a friend who will hold us to account or as a nebulous good principle, will affect what it even means to us to pray.

Theology is also involved each time we encounter the Bible. The "plain meaning" of scripture one occasionally hears references to is simply the one based on our unexamined prejudices. Scriptural studies are in part about trying to minimize the reader's prejudices and assumptions while discovering what we can of the prejudices and assumptions of the writers and editors who are the human vehicles of God's word.

The challenge for most of us, I suspect, is to find ways to reflect on the mystery of the divine and see how that forces us to re-evaluate our prejudices and, as a result, change the way we live.

To that end, I'd like to propose three books for your summer reading list. They are from quite different perspectives, so you can choose to play to your strengths or weak-



nesses in your choices.

Kathleen Norris is an extraordinary poet and writer. Several of her books have been *New York Times* bestsellers. Norris has led a varied life and her writing is from the perspective of a person firmly grounded in reality, with all the struggles and heartaches as well as the joys that life brings. She was not involved in the church for many years, but eventually joined the Presbyterian church in Lemmon, South Dakota,

where her grandmother had been a member for 60 years. I recommend *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*. If you want a more directly theological book, though, you could try *Amazing Grace*.

Anne Lamott found Jesus in St. Andrew's Presbyterian, Marin City, Calif., which she later joined. Just a few years older than Norris, Lamott too has written several books about life and faith. "Witty," "irreverent" and "highly provocative" are words that have been used to describe her gritty writing. While Norris's style reflects her time spent in an abbey, Lamott is at the other end of the spectrum, wrestling with God like Jacob did. *Traveling Mercies*, a collection of autobiographical essays on faith would be a great summer read.

Lastly, for those who feel left out of discussions about the church because they are not represented by the extremes the media gravitate to, Diana Butler Bass's latest book is just the ticket. Butler Bass is a scholar who has written widely in the popular media on religion. *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith* arises from three years of research. As a bonus, if you live in the Toronto area, reading this book will prepare you for Bass's appearance in the spring of 2009 at Rosedale Presbyterian and Knox College.

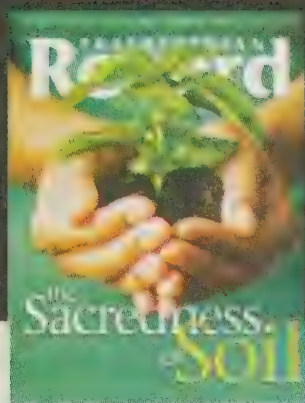
And in 2009 John Vissers and Joseph McLelland, both of The Presbyterian College, Montreal, will bring a study series on theology to the *Record*. Plus, as of September, the history committee begins a series on John Calvin. ■

David Harris



# Letters

letters@presbyterianrecord.ca



## On metaphor and more

It is difficult to understand the intent of Duncan Cameron's letters (March '08 and April '07) as he ends up agreeing with what he seems to be trying to attack or correct. Duncan forgot that Zander Dunn's letter (March 2007) was responding to Calvin Brown's (January 2007) narrow interpretation on the virgin birth. Duncan agrees with me that if we are able to carry on a vibrant conversation then our denomination could be challenged; neither of us could accept a denomination that would not. However, I am not convinced we currently have that open climate; especially when statements like "must be believed by Christians," and not sharing a belief in the virgin birth "undermines the whole authority of scripture" are used. Diversity of opinion I will celebrate, blind insistence on seeing things only from a perspective that mollifies a minority I cannot support—and neither could Luther nor any of the Reformers.

Duncan seems to think that faith is a sum of its contents, that to believe in Jesus one simply must believe certain things about Jesus and that one could have a faith devoid of content. This unfortunate confusion leads Duncan to insist on things which may not really matter. It is as if he wants us to think that the details of Jesus' life are like ingredients in a recipe and if we get them all in and mix them properly then we shall have a good faith, a faith with content. Yet as other letter writers pointed out, "my faith is not a house of ecclesiastical cards propped up by the Immaculate Conception," and, "tell us where in the New Testament

Jesus says that to be his disciple we must believe his mother was a virgin." It seems to me that rather than adherence to particular statements or assertions, Jesus required attention to how we live—keeping his commandment.

In Duncan's response to Dunn's letter he tried to make a distinction between metaphor and reality saying "it's sad when we mistake metaphor for reality." He is confused about the use of metaphors and mistakes the application of his own example. Based on his use of Tom Cochrane's *Life is a Highway* metaphor, it is Calvin Brown and not Zander Dunn who mistook a metaphor to be reality. But is he suggesting that metaphors are not real? Isn't the whole use of metaphor based on the simple fact that the transference of meaning can evoke a greater sense of meaning, of reality? What can be said better than "Juliet is the sun," or "he fell flat on his face" or "Jesus is prophet, priest and king?" If a metaphor is not real then it is dead and meaningless.

Duncan asserts that the gospels together provide a complete picture and that some parts shouldn't be ignored. This was exactly the point I was making (December 2007) about the difficulty some must feel who put so much weight in the idea of the virgin birth. To suggest that difficulty goes both ways misses my point; Duncan reinforces my point very well.

Finally, it would seem that Duncan and I are both committed to that reassuring phrase that we as part of a reformed body must never forget: "under the continual illumination of the Holy Spirit." It is a great arrogance

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## Pontius' Puddle



to believe that we have finally got it all figured out. I welcome the days when that spirit of truth and openness will once again fill our meetings and permeate our discussions so that we can discern God's will and not simply have to listen to the will of others.

REV. MARK TREMBLAY, KINGSTON, ONT.

### Astounded and shocked

I am astounded and shocked at Laurence De Wolfe's January article on the baptism of Jesus. De Wolfe tells us that the first Christology was adoptionist. What about Paul in Philip-  
pians 2 and 2 Corinthians 8? De Wolfe informs us that the Gospels are hopelessly full of contradictions and that

"different New Testament communities had different ideas about where Jesus came from and what that meant." Many students of the Bible, however, will feel that the differences should not be exaggerated and that there is a marvelous unity in the New Testament portrait of our Lord.

De Wolfe wants us to "look beyond" the Church's confession and see that there was a time when Jesus "began to be God's Son." This sounds like adoptionism to me.

Many have been exercised of late about the drift toward the acceptance of homosexuality in the church, but this issue is far more serious. This is the core of our faith—was Jesus a man who

became the Son of God and somehow reveals who God is, or was he always the Son, born of the Virgin Mary, our crucified Saviour and exalted Lord? The church has always affirmed the latter. Is the latter now acceptable?

JOHN VAUDRY, MONTREAL

### Stewards of the soil

I was very happy to see the title The Sacredness of Soil (April); and found the lead article to be a wonderful reminder to all of us about how much we can gain spiritually when we feel the connection with the earth through our food.

But I would just like to add a word in defense of the contribution of our agricultural producers, who are often

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Yours sincerely,  
David Harris  
publisher and editor

Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON M3C 1J7  
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portrayed as enemies of the environment, especially when information about our food supply includes generalizations about how our soil, as well as water, air and biodiversity are all being jeopardized by farming.

Of course there are abuses in agriculture as in any other area, but there are many agricultural producers who act as stewards of the resources of soil, water, air and life. I think we could all learn a lot about the sacredness of soil from those families who try to make a living from the land. Community-supported agriculture is a wonderful first step, but only a limited number of producers have the resources necessary to get this kind of support.

NANCY LEASE, QUEBEC CITY

While I don't always agree with the *Record's* editorials, editor David Harris deserves the return on his wager for God's Creation in April. He is right in saying we have been "sinfully selective" in "our own culpability" regarding abuse of the environment.

I believe we can no longer wash our hands by walking past on the other side of the street. We have a biblical warrant as outlined by Harris. Take Greenpeace. Last year it brought an Amsterdam-registered ship all the way up the St. Lawrence Seaway to enable a group of environmental commandoes to storm a collier bringing coal to the massive generating station at Nanticoke, Ont., resulting in the arrest of three young people from Toronto and Vancouver. They believed civil disobedience was worth the publicity.

Shouldn't we? Or are we content to leave a contaminated planet for our descendents? One reason Canadian environmentalist David Suzuki is so committed is he does not want to look his grandchildren in the eye and say he did nothing. Neither should we. Love of God does not allow us to be indifferent. The time has come to get our hands dirty.

REV. ROD LAMB, KENORA, ONT.

*Re Andrew Faiz's April column, My Global Footprint*

The article seems to engender guilt and hopelessness. The global economy is so intertwined with itself and so interwoven with politics that the vast majority of us Westerners cannot really do much about the origins of the products we buy. If we were to consciously eliminate all dubious products from our shopping, we would probably end up homeless and starving.

Seriously, what's left for us to buy on the budget most of us are forced to live by? I for one refuse to feel guilty about it all—though I am more than willing to write elected officials in protest.

ANDY DERKSEN, VIA EMAIL

### Put away hypocrisy

*Re May Editorial, Civilized and Assimilated*

Your research is on the mark, but will it get as far as the pulpit of a few Presbyterian churches across Canada? We are natives of Mi'hmaq, Algoquian, French, English and Scottish descent, but haven't gone to church, just across the road, for many years. Listening to post colonial culture and century-old attitudes towards those who protected the country for the last 8,000 or so years, is very hard to swallow.

I certainly thank you for alerting us, and hopefully, many others, that, at least, there is one honest Canadian who feels perhaps it's time to put away the hypocrisy of religion, and honestly promote a faith that extends beyond its present colonial boundaries.

GILBERT R. BOSSÉ, MÉTIS-SUR-MER, PQ

### Email woes

Due to an Internet server problem at national offices in April, emails sent to the *Record* may not have been received. If you sent a letter, a People and Places submission, or any other email, please resend and make certain it has been received.

The same would be true for anybody else at national offices bearing a presbyterian.ca email address.

Email remains the most efficient way to reach this magazine; but it does require due diligence to make certain the communication has been received.

THE EDITOR

### Correction:

George Yando (mentioned in an article about his daughter, Beth) is the clerk of the Presbytery of Northern Saskatchewan, not interim moderator.

Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg's Walks of Reconciliation article (May) was not a speech he'd given but a reflection he'd written for the Aboriginal and Church Leaders' Tour website.

### On our website:

Rev. Geoff Johnston responds to the April issue. Prof. A. K. Maconochie remembers when Lent was not celebrated in Scotland because it was deemed Anglican. A remembrance of Stanford Reid by Joanne MacOdrum. A meditation on Faiz's April column, by blogger C. Ruth Johns. ■

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# People & Places

For more People & Places submissions, please visit our website:  
[www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)



Being neighbourly—Youth of Knox, Georgetown, Ont., pitch in for a 20-Minute Makeover in April. It took less than half an hour to spruce up the downtown neighbourhood. Fantastic way to celebrate the arrival of spring (finally!) and other Earth Day oriented activities.



That boy (right) had a lawnmower accident. The young lady, Hanna Ross, of St. Matthew's, Ingleside, Ont., heard about his accident. She gave him a cheque for everything she earned last summer at her father's business. And, that is not the extent of the mission drive in Ingleside. On our website: a cheque for PWS&D.



Rev. Mike Marsden, far left, traveled to this cake, celebrating 175 years of Knox, Oakville, Ont., by horse and wagon (see our website for that photo). Then he led a "Riverside Service" at Knox' first location (also on website), which in 1833 was a wooden schoolhouse but today is a library. A biblical twelve gathered for that first worship; there were considerably more there this April. Celebrating along with Marsden are Kirsty Taddeo, Jack Kent, Luella Frazer, Emily Farr, Agnes Farr and Barbara Browne.



"Gloria! 150 years at Park and Victoria." That's where you'll find St. Andrew's, Windsor, Ont. The story started in 1857 and continues, through the Heritage Weekend last October, when Nancy England, dressed in garb of old, pinned a sprig of heather on clerk of session Charlie Edward. More photos on our website.





Mark 2:4: "And when they couldn't get near him, they uncovered the roof where he was." Chippawa, Niagara Falls, Ont., is in the midst of a campaign to raise funds to make their buildings more accessible and hospitable. And in the midst of that process 19 people decided to join the congregation through adult baptism, confirmations and transfers. From left: Vince DiLibero, John

Archibald, Amy DiLibero, Trish Heidebrecht, Susan Murrins, Linda Carter, Jeanette Winker, Annie Shriner, Amanda Flasko, Kristina Brian, Jim Alty, Mackenzie Ernst, Heidi Rogers, Reed Eaglesham, Linda Sharma-Mackey, Lynn Needham, Kevin Mackey, and Joelle Schonberg. Missing, Jackie White. Mark 2:14: "And as he passed by he said, 'Follow me.'"



Ten years ago the national church archives were rededicated to a renovated state-of-the-art, climate-controlled space located on the main floor of the national office. This April there was cake! From left: Rev. Stephen Kendall, Principal Clerk; Kim Arnold, Archivist; Bob Anger, Assistant Archivist.

## Had cake lately?

See [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca) for instructions on How To Submit Photos in the Digital Age.

### On our website:

Ashley Barkman graduated this year from Knox College (see page 33); but, that's just *one* of the wonderful things that happened to her this year. Marjorie Anderson and Margaret Pace retire from serving the choir at St. David's, Halifax. Bill and Gail join the Hawkesbury session. The Korean Choir join with Knox, Crescent, Kensington and First, Montreal, to raise funds for PWS&D. Rev. John Wilson and Rev. Charlene Wilson are inducted at Westminster, Sault Ste. Marie.





Their minister at Knox, Alliston, Ont., Bob Graham, learned about a Canadian invention that could purify dirty water. So, this youth group, known as The Rock, thought they could raise maybe \$1,200 so people in developing nations could have drinkable water. Between January and Palm Sunday, Joel Schernhammer, Olivia Rutledge, Elly Perry, Kristen Ferreira, Rose LaMarche, Nancy Gallant (youth leader), Rebecca Robson, Cliff Perry, Becca Nicol and Teresa Morley shot five times past their goal.

# Morrison steps in for Fee

REV. IAN MORRISON has stepped in as the acting General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency for an unspecified period of time. Morrison, who served in this position for nine years until retiring in 2005, is filling in for Rev. Rick Fee who is recovering from time spent in hospital.

Fee recently travelled to Africa, and soon after his return, was hospitalized due to a bacterial infection that required the care and expertise of a team of specialists. After heart surgery and spending about two weeks in a Toronto hospital, Fee was discharged on April 28 and is now staying with family while he recovers.

Morrison's role will be to support the ongoing work of the LMA and to tend the department until Fee's return.

"I'm happy to be able to do this for the church and for Rick," Morrison told the *Record* from Montreal for The Presbyterian College's convocation.

"I am sorry I have to do this under these circumstances. I wish Rick a speedy recovery, but not necessarily a speedy return because he needs to rest and gain back his strength."

Fee has cleared all of his appointments through to the Fall. Morrison has agreed to cover until the end of June and

**After heart surgery and two weeks in hospital, Fee was discharged and is staying with family while he recovers**

will continue as needed past that date. He will be present at General Assembly, held in Ottawa June 1-6, on behalf of Fee along with Rev. Daniel Cho, the convenor of the Life and Mission Agency.

Please direct any well wishes for Fee to the General Assembly Office at skendall@presbyterian.ca or aphillips@presbyterian.ca at LMA. ■



# Laforme named chief commissioner on TRC

AN ABORIGINAL JUDGE has been appointed to the government's truth and reconciliation commission designed to provide a nationwide forum where former students of residential schools can tell their stories of abuse.

As reported in the *National Post*, Justice Harry LaForme, a member of the Ontario Court of Appeal and the first aboriginal to be appointed to an appellate court in Canada, called what happened at the schools "horrendous" and credited the victims and survivors of the schools for the creation of the commission.

"We are very happy with this appointment," Rev. Stephen Kendall, the Presbyterian Church's principal clerk, told the *Record*. "Justice LaForme brings a stature, wisdom and commitment that we believe will help the commission in its important work.

"We are also pleased to see that his appointment has received the support of the Assembly of First Nations and other aboriginal groups."

Kendall met LaForme at the official announcement in the House of Commons and was "impressed with his sincere desire to lead this work thoughtfully."

The commission will be estab-

lished on June 1 after two panel members are appointed to work with LaForme. Their task is to prepare an historical record of what happened in the schools, and they therefore have access to church and government archives that will give clues to how the schools operated. The commission is not intended to be a gathering place for evidence for criminal prosecution.

**"We are also pleased to see that his appointment has received the support of the Assembly of First Nations and other aboriginal groups"**

The commission is part of the multi-billion dollar settlement approved by the federal government, which also mandated lump sum payments to all former students. Churches, including the Presbyterian Church, have been involved in their own settlements, and will take part in the truth and reconciliation commission when necessary.

A formal apology from the federal government is expected before Parliament breaks for the summer. ■  
—AM with files from National Post

## Anniversary party, despite fire

THE CONGREGATION OF Knox, Cannington, Ont., celebrated 144 years of Christian witness in its community on May 4. Joyous celebrations were held that day, and Rev. Paul Johnston, Moderator of the Presbytery of Lindsay-Peterborough, was the guest preacher. Special musical guests were on hand, and lunch followed the service.

The event was an important one as the congregation moves on after an

arsonist set a fire that destroyed the church building last October. The building was demolished before the walls could fall down on their own. No one was injured. The congregation hopes to build again, though concrete plans are still pending.

Located in a small town of 2,000, Knox, Cannington, is part of an open-door cluster along with St. John's, Cresswell, and Wick Presbyterian Church. ■



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# Well written, well designed

Judges praise *Record's* content and appearance.

THE PRESBYTERIAN RECORD was awarded third place in the general excellence category for denominational magazines at the recent Canadian Church Press awards ceremony and convention in Cambridge, Ont., and narrowly missed placing in the same category at the Associated Church Press in Dallas just two weeks before that.

Amy MacLachlan, the *Record's* staff reporter, was cited for a fifth straight year for news and feature writing by both awarding bodies. MacLachlan won a total of four awards for her work in 2007.

At ACP, she took a first place in the long-format magazine feature category for her February 2007 residential schools article. "Amazing package," said the judge.

That article also garnered her an honourable mention in the CCP's prestigious A. C. Forrest Memorial Award, named after a long-time editor of the *United Church Observer*. She also earned a first in the news story category for Preparing for Pandemics (April 2007). Her on-going coverage of the events at Trinity, Oro, Ont., earned a third for in-depth news event.

Art director Caroline Bishop led the *Record* staff with five awards. Bishop, who joined the magazine for the March 2007 issue, took second place at ACP for her April cover and a third for designing the June issue. She also received a third place for cover design at CCP for the October issue. Design of the October Afghanistan feature and design of the entire November issue earned her two more second place awards.

Andrew Faiz, the magazine's man-

aging editor, was awarded first place at CCP for writing the Afghanistan feature article in October and editor David Harris's December editorial tied for third place at ACP.

Two contributors to the *Record* also received awards. Colin Cross placed second at ACP for seasonal writing for the Christmas issue and Cliff Bear

**The editorial content of the *Record* is produced by one of the smallest staff contingents for a magazine of its size and frequency**

was awarded a second for illustrating MacLachlan's article on residential schools in February.

The editorial content of the *Record* is produced by one of the smallest staff contingents for a magazine of its size and frequency, with editor Harris doubling as publisher, responsible for the magazine's business operations. This is an important part of the operation since the magazine does not receive funding from the Presbyterian Church and depends on subscriptions, advertising and donations for its financial survival.

Much of the *Record* is written by members of the Presbyterian Church and many of them were praised by the judges at both conferences. The following are comments taken from CCP judges:

- Revs. Will Ingram, Lynne Donovan and Don MacLeod were called "courageous and controversial" for their various book reviews through 2007.
- Of Rev. Laurence DeWolfe's Progressive Lectionary column: "Good use of

biblical references to challenge and stimulate ... fresh insights ... the reader is not 'preached to' but led to do further reflection."

- Judges loved Alex Luyckx' September cover photograph and Bethany Morton's December cover drawing, calling them "fun" and "great."

- Of David Webber's monthly theological reflections: "Good use of personal story telling to explore an aspect of the lived experience of faith ... an engaging reflection ... evocative rather than didactic writing."

- Carol Ann Keys' Wanted: Excited Christians, March: "Cleverly written in an original way. Addresses a major issue comprehensively with an engaging piece."

- Rev. Alex MacLeod, Recipe of Hope, April: "If the 'church' is to survive, we would all be well advised to slip into the back row on an emergent 'service' and tuck that spirit into our hearts and soul and take it back to our places of worship. Fascinating. Well balanced."

- Faiz, Grant Us Wisdom, March: "An ongoing and evolving story. Capture it in book form."

- Faiz, Pop Christianity, Brand Me, November: "Brand Me! I don't [understand what it's doing in] the church press."

- Harris, Editorial, December: "The stand may not be what most pacifist Canadians would prefer to read, but it needed to be clearly stated, and this editorial does it."

- Harris, Editorial, November: "This hard-hitting editorial seeks, successfully, to probe into a breakaway congregation's actions." ■





Shortly after Cyclone Nargis ripped through Myanmar (previously known as Burma) killing an estimated 100,000 people on May 2 and 3, Presbyterian World Service and Development partner, Action by Churches Together was preparing emergency supplies to take into the country. Donations can be made through PWS&D.

# Nigerian elder honoured

A BELOVED ELDER of the Presbyterian Church in Nigeria who died two years ago prompted an idea from Canadian Presbyterians to help others in his name. Elder Chief Ntieyong Udo Akpan died in August 2006 at the age of 82. He contributed to the growth of the church in Nigeria, and always welcomed young Canadians and foreigners to his homeland. Upon his death, the PCN organized a foundation in his honour. The N.U. and Margaret Akpan Memorial Elders' Formation and Renewal Fund was the idea of Rev. Rick Fee, former missionary to Nigeria and current general secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada's Life and Mission Agency. Fee consulted with Rev. Arlene Onuoha, a PCC missionary currently in Nigeria, and the Principal

Clerk of the PCN. After sending out an appeal to those who knew Akpan and his wife, Margaret, about 1 million Nigerian Nairas (about \$8,500 Cdn) was

**As one of the founding fathers of the Nigerian nation, Akpan is remembered for excellent stewardship in political and public affairs, transparent service, humility, loyalty and sound administrative skills**

contributed to the fund from former missionaries and from the PCC's International Ministries department.

The fund is available to presbyteries and synods across the PCN to enable courses for the training, spiritual and administrative renewal of ruling

elders of the PCN.

As one of the founding fathers of the Nigerian nation, Akpan is remembered for excellent stewardship in political and public affairs, transparent service, humility, loyalty and sound administrative skills. His life in politics led to a career as the Chief Secretary to Government of Eastern Nigeria and Head of Civil Service of the Eastern Region of Nigeria, a position he occupied in the time leading up to the secession of Biafra.

Akpan was a loyal church servant, serving in various capacities with the PCN, the Christian Council of Nigeria, the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Christian Health Association of Nigeria. ■—AM with files from The Presbyterian Today



# Calvin at 500

Celebrating the father of Reformation. BY DON MACLEOD

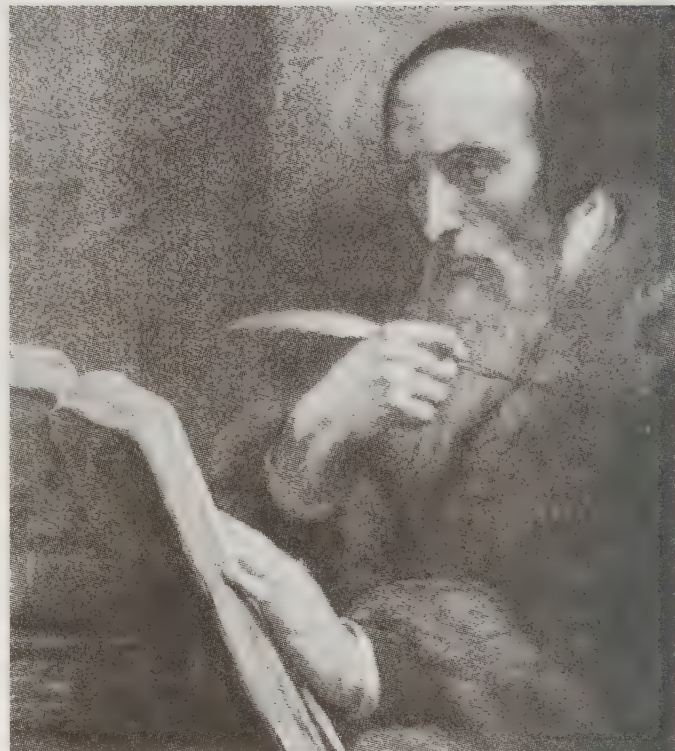
NEXT YEAR IS the cinco-centennial of our theological parent, John Calvin, the originator of our Reformed identity. To mark the event the Committee on History will publish a popular series of 10 monthly articles from September to June in the *Presbyterian Record* on the significance of John Calvin in today's world.

Born July 10, 1509, Jean Cauvin (as he was originally known) grew up in the Picardy town of Noyon, 60 miles northeast of Paris. His reputation has been variously celebrated and derided: he is portrayed as a dark and brooding figure whose one contribution to the history of thought was predestination (which was arguably taught by the apostle Paul or, if you prefer, Augustine). A strange legacy for a warm-hearted classmate of Rabelais at the University of Paris whose motto pictured a burning heart: "My heart Lord I give you, promptly and sincerely."

The 10-part series will bring him into a more favourable light and also make him accessible to those of us without formal theological training. Calvin cast a long shadow over Protestantism, and particularly in Scotland, the Netherlands, Hungary, Ireland, the United States and most recently Korea.

Peter Bush will start the series in September with an introductory article on Calvin's life. Recent moderator Hans Kouwenberg writes on Calvin and preaching. Christine O'Reilly examines Calvin's view of church government and specifically how presbyteries should operate. Barry Mack asks whether Calvin was the father of Canadian capitalism. John Vissers looks at Calvin and theological education. Ken Stewart shares his extensive research into Calvin and missions. Ian Wishart views Calvin's spirituality (*The Imitation of Christ* in Calvin). I will conclude by bringing together the various strands of Calvin. Articles still to be assigned are Calvin and religious tolerance, and Calvin and national identity: Scots, Irish, Dutch, Hungarian, or Korean.

The 500th anniversary of Calvin's birth will feature many celebra-



tions, academic conferences, public services of thanksgiving, and articles both learned and popular. It's hoped that this series in the *Record* will bring Calvin alive for readers, particularly for those for whom Calvin has either been maligned or is unknown. Additional study material will be available on the *Record's* website: [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca). ■

## Conference grants available

A NEW CONFERENCE FUND administered by the Life and Mission agency is available for anyone in the Presbyterian Church planning a small or large conference. Conference planners may apply for up to one-third of the cost of the conference to a maximum of \$8,000. Those submitting an application must provide a proposed budget for the event, along with goals and expected benefits to the church, in order to be considered. Since the fund's inception about a month ago, it has already assisted the Body, Mind and

Soul Conference held in May in Montreal, the Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Conference also in May in Ingersoll, Ont., and a Presbyterian Church of Taiwan/Presbyterian Church in Canada Theological Consultation to be held in Vancouver this month.

For more information, contact the Vine Helpline at 1-866-642-2830 or [thevine@presbyterian.ca](mailto:thevine@presbyterian.ca), or visit the PCC website at [www.presbyterian.ca](http://www.presbyterian.ca) and type Conference Fund in the search bar. ■ -AM



# Don Elliott's gift

Presbyterian's love of nature lives on in his congregation. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

A LOVE OF NATURE led the late Don Elliott and his wife, Heather to ensure a rare and mature seven-hectare woodlot in southern Ontario's Oro Moraine was conserved and protected for future generations. Known as Elliott Woods, the land was donated to the Couchiching Conservancy in November 2006, whose mandate is to uphold the natural features of the forest while sharing it with the community. It's exactly what Don Elliott had hoped for the area.

"Protecting Elliott Woods was almost a moral and spiritual imperative for Don," said Heather Elliott. "He cared very deeply about God's Creation, and felt that God has given us the responsibility to care for it."

The Elliotts owned the land since 1966, spurred on by Don's appreciation for trees and nature. Thanks to Don and his brother's tender care of the woods over the decades, the lot matured to a high-quality hardwood forest, and has become a much-visited and loved escape for the Elliott family. It has since been identified as a natural heritage core area with-

in the Township of Oro-Medonte's Official Plan.

But Don Elliott's visits to the woods ended on Nov. 1, 2006, when he died of cancer, just days after the woods were dedicated as a protected landscape. He was 71 years old. He was an elder at Glenview, Toronto, where Heather still worships and serves.

The Glenview congregation is continuing Don's concern for the environment by establishing the Caring for Creation team, which explores how Glenview can be more proactive in caring for the environment. So far, the team has held two educational events, and the church has replaced plastic cups with reusable glass cups for coffee hour. They are also looking into having an energy audit of the church building, and held a nature walk and picnic last September in Elliott Woods.

Don also served on the board of Knox College, and the board of the *Presbyterian Record*.

Please visit [www.glenviewchurch.ca/delliott%20woods.htm](http://www.glenviewchurch.ca/delliott%20woods.htm) for more information on Elliott Woods. ■

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## Stevenson up for writing award

FORMER *GLAD TIDINGS* editor, L. June Stevenson has been nominated for the 2008 Best New Canadian Christian Author Award for her memoir *Tracing Rainbows: Lessons Along the Way*. Stevenson, of Ajax, Ont., is up against five other authors for her manuscript which, if it wins, could be published by Castle Quay Books Canada.

The award, sponsored by The Word Guild a national association of Canadian writers and editors who are Christian, and Castle Quay Books Canada, recognizes the most

promising manuscript by a Canadian who writes from a Christian faith perspective.

The winner will be announced on June 11 at The Word Guild writing awards gala in Mississauga, Ont., which the public is invited to attend.

The annual competition is open to any Canadian citizen or permanent resident who affirms the Apostles' Creed and has never had a book published by a royalty-paying publisher. Visit [www.thewordguild.com](http://www.thewordguild.com) for details. ■



# Missionary takes his dream overseas

He was born to spread the gospel. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

SERGIO GOMEZ SANTIZ knew God had a plan for him since childhood. An indigenous Mayan from Chiapas, Mexico, he comes from a family who were among the first Christians in his culture. While visiting the national office in March, Gomez told the *Record* that his “grandmother was my first mentor. She prepared me for this role.”

That role is as a missionary in Eastern Europe—the first sent out by his presbytery in Chiapas. First he had to learn English, which he did in Toronto beginning last October sponsored by the Presbyterian Church. He left for his new mission post in April, for what he hopes will be the next three decades.

Gomez’s dream, along with the dream of his church, rests on the call in Matthew 28:19: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

He dreams of sharing the Gospel as it was shared with him and his people more than 50 years ago. “The missionaries planted a very good seed,” said Gomez. “It grew into a very big tree that bears much fruit. So now we have to plant the seed elsewhere.

“Jesus Christ changed our lives,” he continued, speaking of how his people converted from animism to Christianity. “And it is possible to change the lives of others with Jesus Christ.”

Gomez is part of the Tzeltal tribe, to whom American missionaries brought the Gospel back in 1950. The Reformed

Church of America has been one of the main mission partners doing work in Chiapas, Mexico, and has been working with the Chiapas Mission Agency in sending a missionary to Eastern Europe.

It has not been easy. Chiapas is one of the poorest states in Mexico, and locals often wonder why these overseas resources aren’t being spent in their own community. The churches in Chiapas do have local mission work, but have been working for 10 years to push their dream further. The annual mission budget is \$1 million pesos (or about \$95,000 Cdn). To meet this, each church member must give 50 pesos or not quite \$5 Cdn a year.

“It’s difficult for many people in Chiapas,” said Gomez, whose own congregation has 600 members. “It’s difficult for them to see outside their own financial situation. This is our challenge. But it is possible! We must understand the great commission. We need obedience.”

Gomez has a mechanical engineering degree. It is the trade he will practice in Europe while he learns the language and builds relationships.

Presbyteries in Chiapas began the first missionary training school in the state about a decade ago. Five years later, a missionary from Eastern Europe visited



**“We are a baby in mission. These are our first steps”**

the General Assembly of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico, urging them to send a missionary to his area. Along with Gomez, the Mission Agency hopes to send more missionaries overseas, and mobilize other churches in Mexico to take part.

“We are a baby in mission. These are our first steps,” said Gomez, his dark eyes betraying his deep love for this work.

“I am very grateful to the PCC for helping me,” said Gomez. “My prayer is that God touches your hearts to pray for the nations, and I invite you to pray for us, my people in Chiapas, and for my ministry.” ■



## Sudan church growing

**ENI**—Despite the daily challenges in Sudan, the church—as it is in many parts of Africa—is growing. But they must contend not only with a nation that is rebuilding after two decades of civil war, but also with the presence (and growth) of Islam. Churches complain of rumoured conversions to Islam based on inducements of scholarships, money and material goods.

In South Sudan, the Episcopal Church of the Sudan with the help of the American evangelical organization Samaritan's Purse, recently opened 10 churches in one month. Where buildings do not exist, the church meets under trees.

Gatherings of 1,500 people or more are common at the Dinka-language service in the city of Rumbek, the capital of Lakes State, in the South Sudan region. A total of 5,400 faithful attended the outdoor Easter Sunday service.

Down the road, the Roman Catholic Holy Family church in Rumbek recently added a 7:30 a.m. English-language service to take the burden off the other three Sunday services (held in English, Arabic and Dinka languages). Bishop Caesar Mazzolari, an Italian-born bishop whose tan reveals his 27 years in the African sun, says in a country where Islam is always an appealing alternative, his church suffers from the lack of proper Christian formation. "If we don't have catechists who are mature, we can give only surface knowledge. Then, as Islam comes along, [Muslims] can easily punch through that superficial knowledge."

## Indians rue commercial church

**ENI**—The National Council of Churches in India spoke out against what it describes as the growing commercialization of the Christian faith.

"Churches too are caught in the trap of seeing people primarily as individual customers, and the Christian faith becomes a product to be marketed," lamented Bishop Dinesh Kumar Sahu, general secretary of the council.

"Today's phenomenon expresses itself in the form of an unholy alliance between 'evangelism' and 'consumerism,'" rued Bishop Sahu of the Church of North India.

"In the marketplace of religious ideas and persuasion, free and competitive denominationalism contradicts the basis of being a Church."

"The sellers of the prosperity gospel are doing great disservice by selling the Gospel to those who seek success in their business, profession and student examinations," decried Kunchala Rajaratnam, a former NCCI president.

Besides this "sacred commercialization," Rajaratnam asserted, "we also have rampant secular commercialisation of the administration and elections of the Church." He asserted that bribes were being paid for appointments in church institutions.

## Rice crisis spiritual

**ENI**—The rice shortage, which the Philippines, an agricultural country, has been experiencing since March, is not only a matter of scarcity but also the result of a spiritual crisis, says an activist Roman Catholic priest.

"The rice crisis is not only an issue of supply and demand," said Rev. Robert Reyes. "It is a subtle problem of connectivity between nature and us, between and amongst us Filipinos, between us and our leaders, and between us and God."

During May Day workers' rallies throughout southeast Asia, calls came for lower food prices, especially for rice, throughout the region. In the Philippines, some activists urged President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to resign. Ousted former president Joseph Estrada blamed Arroyo's administration for a "lack of foresight" regarding agriculture.

Reyes says the loss of "connectivity" is apparent in what he describes as the Philippine government's "lopsided policy" of serving the demands of the global market first rather than giving priority to the agricultural productivity and food security of this southeast Asian country of more than 92 million.

## Churches should talk about 'It'

**ENI**—A Japanese study group of Christian educators and doctors say sex education should be promoted from Christian perspectives.

"We have a sense of impending crisis



about the rapid growth of infectious sexual diseases among teenagers in recent years," said Kunihiro Tominaga, a Christian obstetrician and gynecologist, the study chair.

"Sex education that teaches 'safe sex' is spread nationwide and sex is defined as 'pleasure' and 'a communication tool' and has no perspective on sex as 'personal interaction.' We would like to return to the fact of the original blessing that humans were created in 'God's image' and to promote studies on sex education based on 'the dignity of personality and sex.'"

## CIDA funds Palestine hospital

**CNW**—The Canadian International Development Agency and Canadian Lutheran World Relief are contributing \$632,000 to improve access to essential health care in the Palestinian Territories. The funding will be directed to the Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem, the only institution offering specialized medical services like cancer treatment and dialysis to Palestinians.

Funding will be used to enlarge the capacity of the hospital's geriatric care ward from a 16-bed unit into a 28-bed unit. Plans to expand and refurbish the existing space are complete. Construction will commence immediately. Work will be carried out by local trades. The project timeline anticipates completion by December. ■

# The Theological iPod

"In the fury of the moment  
I can see the Master's hand."

BY ANDREW FAIZ

**M**y iPod crashed—long story, not terribly interesting—and I have to rebuild. A good opportunity to bring some theology to my music. Here's my opening salvo; I could use your help for more.

**Is That All There Is?—Peggy Lee.** My history of religion professor said this was one question asked by all religions. Of course, he also referred to the 1969 recording as a "recent song" which was doddering commonplace at Victoria College, University of Toronto, in the early 80s.

**Mother's Little Helper—Rolling Stones.** Before they were caricatures of themselves, they were great social critics: "The pursuit of happiness just seems a bore." Is that all there is, my friend? They also have this other song with the lyrics: "Pleased to meet you/ Hope you guess my name/ But what's puzzling you/ Is the nature of my game."

**That Jews and Jesus song by Kinky Friedman.** An attack on rednecks which strikes me as egregious, but fun. This is in the same tradition as *Jesus Was A Capricorn* by Kris Kristofferson and *Jesus Was A Terrorist* by The Dead Kennedys and *Jesus Thinks You Are A Jerk* by Frank Zappa—songs that take Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, quite seriously and expose the myriad hypocrisies of the church and society. On second thought, best to not include these—can only lead to upsetting the safety zone.

**Jesus Is Just Alright With Me—The Doobie Brothers.** I'm beginning to expose my age, I must pretend to know something that was released in the past decade. This song? Not a lot of theology, I'll grant you, but a cute anthem none-the-less.

**God Walks Among Us Now (Jesus Song No. 6)—The Flaming Lips.** "Used to be all right/ But things got strange/ Used to take all night/ But things've changed and God walks among us now." From their lips ...

**I Believe In Jesus—Donna Summers.** Spiritually ecstatic—not quite the material of her disco fame. "And I'm going to heaven by and by 'cause I already been through hell." A strange song; but heartfelt.

**I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For—U2.** My apologies for including the song that launched a billion,

at least, sermons, of which I heard one and it over-reached and I've read a half dozen over the years and they've been gear-grinders, but it's a great song that expresses a profound spiritual yearning and we can't go around judging great works of art by their mediocre commentators, that would be like judging the Saviour by his followers, and, of course, there's Larry Mullen's drum and Adam Clayton's bass.

**Every Grain of Sand—Bob Dylan.** When I was a lay minister I used to listen to this every Sunday morning before heading to church: The greatest prayer ever set to music; a deep, dark meditation that scrapes the soul. There are no secrets between the devout and God. And there is no despair in that relationship. I don't listen to this as

**Jesus Was a A Capricorn, Jesus Was A Terrorist, Jesus Thinks You Are a Jerk—songs that take our Saviour and Lord very seriously ... best to not include these, might upset the safety zone**

often as I once did; I find it too powerful. I was younger then, and stronger. I'm older now and too responsible.

**Solid Rock and Saved—Bob Dylan.** That cassette (what's that?) I made with the song above also included these two to pull me out of my confession.

**Wilderness—Joy Division.** Another track from my wayward youth.

**Suzanne—Leonard Cohen.** I have no idea what this song is about and have never understood the Jesus verse. I keep listening to it, the way Dustin Hoffman recited the Who's On First routine in *Rain Man*, as if it's some code I need to break. Maybe one day.

**Can't Tell Me Nothing—Kanye West.** Hah, you thought I'd pick *Jesus Walks*, which is a fine song. But, this one is plain straight honest without the moral indignation. I mean, we're talking songs, not sermons. That's my other iPod and its fine. ■

*Andrew Faiz is the managing editor of this publication. Add to this list by writing to [letters@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:letters@presbyterianrecord.ca). Also, Faiz uses poetic license: he has only one iPod.*



# Summer Book Club

## Reading Theology

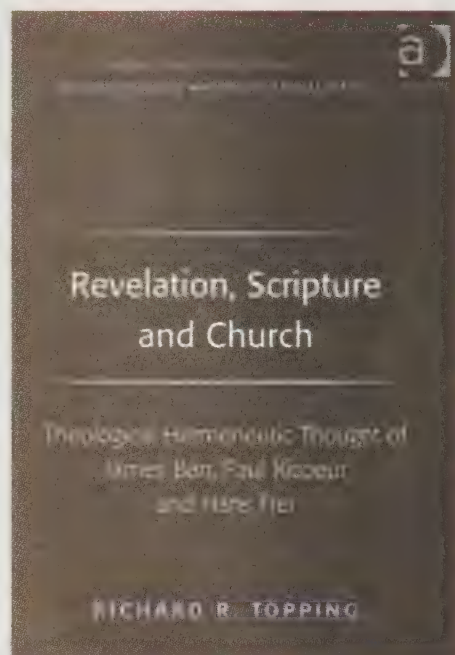
- *Revelation, Scripture and Church: Theological Hermeneutic Thought on James Barr, Paul Ricoeur and Hans Frei* by Richard B. Topping
- *Understanding the Faith: Essays in Philosophical Theology* by Joseph C. McClelland
- *Theology for Non-Theologians* by Armin Cappelletti
- *A Conspiracy of Love: Living Theology and Beyond Childless Second Marriages* by Wendy Reid
- *In Dying We Are Born: The Challenge and the Hope for Contemporary Christianity* by Peter Dink

# Reading Scripture Rightly

God creates, accosts and sustains the church  
by means of Holy Scripture. BY JOHN VISSERS

**Revelation, Scripture and Church:  
Theological Hermeneutic Thought of  
James Barr, Paul Ricoeur and Hans Frei**

by Richard R. Topping  
*Ashgate*



These are tough times for Bible reading in the mainline Protestant church. A former colleague of mine once said there are basically two groups of people who read the Bible: those of us who make it say whatever they want, and those of us who make it say nothing at all.

Richard Topping, senior minister at St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal, and part-time lecturer in theology and ministry at The Presbyterian College, has written a very fine academic treatment of Bible reading in the church today. He focuses on three 20th century thinkers who have looked at how the Bible may be “soundly and adequately interpreted” for the church: James Barr (who, incidentally, began his academic career as a professor of Bible at The Presbyterian College in the late 1940s), Paul Ricoeur (who gave the first Roberts Lectures at the Presbyterian College in the 1950s), and Yale theologian Hans Frei.

Each one of these scholars represents an important trend in Bible reading as they wrestle with the meaning and truth of scripture. According to Topping, the Scottish Presbyterian theologian James Barr finds the meaning of the Bible in the historical context of the author. If we can just get “behind the text” of the Bible to the circumstances within which it was written, we’ll get at the essential meaning. Historical critical scholarship helps us do this, Barr argues, and therefore it should be privileged in the way we read the Bible.

The French philosopher and Reformed theologian Paul Ricoeur has, as Topping describes it, a quite different strategy: the meaning of a biblical passage is located “in front

of the text.” If we can just understand how texts function and how readers read from their own perspective, we’ll enter into the world of meaning created by the interplay between the Bible and its readers. Philosophical understandings of interpretation—what scholars call “hermeneutics,” should therefore be privileged in the way we read the Bible.

The third approach is represented by the American post-liberal theologian Hans Frei. He believes, Topping argues, that the meaning of the Bible is set “within the text” and understood as the Christian community engages in reading practices informed by the nature of the text itself and by the reading conventions (i.e. tradition) of the church. Christian theology, centered in Jesus Christ, and

set out in the history of the church, should therefore be privileged in the way we read the Bible.

Topping helpfully points out how each of these strategies is intended to help the church read the Bible critically, i.e. to prevent us from reading the Bible in ways that make it say whatever we want it to say. Historical criticism, philosophical hermeneutics and ecclesial practices, rightly employed, should provide a check against this. Critical reading does not mean we are free to read into the Bible whatever we wish from our own experience, notwithstanding the fact that a good deal of recent popular biblical scholarship tends to do exactly that (see John Spong or Tom Harpur for striking examples).

But Topping also notes that each of these three thinkers, as helpful as they may be, falls short in an important way. Barr, Ricoeur and Frei each provide a natural account of Bible reading, but they all fail to account adequately for God’s involvement in how the Bible came to be written, in what the Bible is all about, and in how the Bible is to be read and interpreted. “Talk of God,” Topping argues, “is eclipsed by the terminal consideration of human realities.”



Mining the legacy of his own Reformed tradition, especially as found in the theologies of John Calvin and Karl Barth, Topping suggests that we need to recover a theological understanding of the Bible for the life of the church. Such an understanding, he believes, begins with an acknowledgment that in scripture we meet the God whose word the Bible is, namely the Triune God of grace revealed in Jesus Christ. Historical, hermeneutical and ecclesial considerations are important, but not at the expense of theological considerations. Readers of the Bible must always be reminded that this is about God and that God's action in revelation and salvation makes it possible for us to hear scripture as the voice of the living God. The really critical element in reading the Bible comes when we realize that God creates, accosts and sustains the church by means of scripture.

**Critical reading does not mean we are free to read into the Bible whatever we wish from our own experience, notwithstanding the fact that a good deal of recent popular biblical scholarship tends to do exactly that**

This book is important for at least two reasons. First, it reminds us that we are a people of the Book, a community of the Word. It challenges us to think about what we believe about the Bible. It encourages us to think about what we do when we read the Bible. It calls into question our tendency to read the Bible without reference to God. In short, it reminds us of what we confess about the Bible in *Living Faith*, namely that scripture "is the standard of all doctrine by which we must test any word that comes to us from church, world, or inner experience."

Secondly, Topping's book signals something of a continuing theological renaissance among Canadian Presbyterian ministers and teachers. In recent years a number of important books have been published by Canadian Presbyterian scholars, including parish ministers. At a time when the Presbyterian Church seems to be preoccupied with its own problems and in pursuit of pragmatic solutions, it is encouraging to know that among our leaders are those who take theology seriously; that there are, among us, those who think critically about the faith and life of the church in light of scripture rather than in terms of the latest market-tested trends; that there are—and this is perhaps most important of all—those who believe it's time once again to turn to God. ■

*Rev. Dr. John Vissers is principal of The Presbyterian College, Montreal. The books mentioned in the Record can be purchased through the WMS Bookroom: [bookroom@presbyterian.ca](mailto:bookroom@presbyterian.ca)*

# BUILDING HOPE

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# Prophets in the Pulpit

A collection of essays about the diet of beefy truths.

BY WILLIAM KLEMPA

## Understanding the Faith: Essays in Philosophical Theology

By Joseph C. McLelland  
*Clement Academic*



This is a superb collection of 18 essays by Dr. Joseph C. McLelland. They span a half-century and cover a variety of topics grouped under three main headings: Theology and Ministry, Theology and the Reformed Tradition and Theology and Canadian Society. Most of the essays were written during McLelland's 50-year association with The Presbyterian College, Montreal, and his almost equally long association with McGill University where he occupied the J. W. McConnell Chair in Philosophy of Religion. A witty, lighter take on the history of The Presbyterian College entitled *Adventures in P-C Land: A Saurian Testament* has happily been included as an appendix. The essays are written in McLelland's lively, engaging style and are a delight to read.

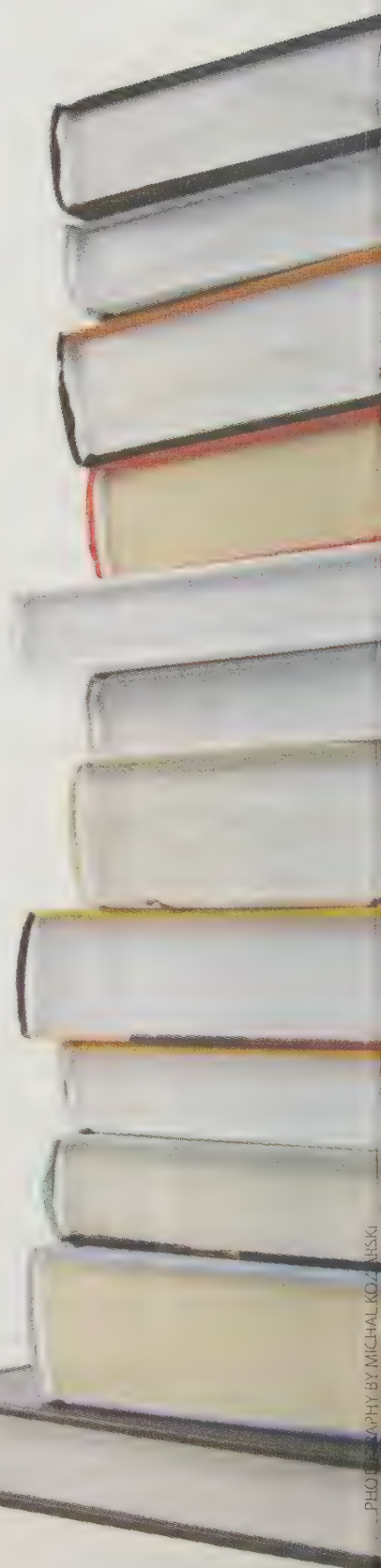
To give readers a taste of the rich fare offered here, I will focus on one essay from each part. Of particular interest in Part One is the challenging 1993 convocation address, *Where's the Beef? Theology for 21st Century Adults*.

Taking his cue from New Testament texts calling on Christians to be mature in their thinking (1 Cor. 14:20) and counselling them as adults to feed on solid food (Hebrews 5:11-6:5), McLelland speaks of the threefold ministry required in the 21st century as prophetic, mystical and alienated. There is no

greater need, he believes, than to have prophets in our pulpits who hear a word from the Lord and warn of the dire consequences of not heeding God. Also needed are mystics who have the gift to discern the divine in the ups and downs of human life and to invite and persuade people, by faith, hope and love, to join the family of God. The 21st century minister must also be a "resident alien." Prophets, mystics and aliens must be properly equipped. "To be a prophet demands a theology of church and society. To be a mystic involves a theology of experience. To be an alien, however, requires a theology of 'possible worlds.'" Ministry, he concludes, cannot be satisfied with subsisting on "soft food and simple notions" but must offer "a diet of beefy truth."

Part Two has essays on predestination, covenant theology, Calvin and philosophy, the mundane work of the Holy Spirit and on Peter Martyr Vermigli, the 16th century Italian reformer, the renaissance of whose work can be largely attributed to McLelland's 1957 pioneering study *The Visible Words of God: An Exposition of the Sacramental Theology of Peter Martyr Vermigli* and his subsequent editorship of the Peter Martyr Library.

Of considerable interest and continuing relevance in this second part is a study paper on Episcopacy in the Reformed Church. McLelland rightly contends that Presbyterianism is not anti-episcopal. The kind of episcopacy it advocates, however, is not,







**Because Jesus once cried out: 'Why have YOU forsaken ME?'  
we can rest in the surety that we are never forsaken**

"monarchical episcopacy, that is, vested in a single bishop" but "corporate episcopacy," that is, episcopal government by a council of presbyters. A quibble can be raised: he affirms that ruling elders share with ministers in the episcopal function of presbytery. Yet he also states that ordination is not in the hands of the court of presbytery "but only and strictly in the ordained ministers of that Court." Is this consistent? Is the act of ordaining not an aspect of the corporate function of governing (in which ruling elders are included)? This is definitely not a problem of McLelland's making but that of the Presbyterian tradition. Should we continue to live with this ambiguity or do we need to rethink and clarify this matter as the Church of Scotland has done recently?

Essays on W. W. Bryden, religion in Canada, Canlit's view of Presbyterians, and doxology make up Part Three. The final essay, *A Serious Playfulness*, is McLelland's favourite. It is also, as he says, a reliable expression of his theological position. The essay is a play of ideas based on the Genesis stories about Isaac, the child of laughter, God's gift of grace and promise to Abraham and Sarah, each of whom had one foot in the grave.

The Isaac stories offer McLelland the opportunity to reflect both playfully and seriously on such central themes as God's love and care for humankind, images of God, justification by faith, comedy and tragedy, jubilee and utopia, and covenant. On the last subject he suggests God makes other covenants, in particular with the Ishmaelites, the peoples of Arabia, the religion of Islam, but he does not enlarge on this point. But perhaps we should not expect him to do so in a highly poetic essay on spirituality. Still one is tempted to ask how these "other covenants" are related to the eternal covenant God made with Israel and the Church (see the earlier essay, *Covenant Theology—a Re-evaluation*)?

McLelland emphasizes that humour or playfulness is never free from suffering and pain but it is that which sustains us despite life's contradictions. "Because Jesus once cried out: 'Why have YOU forsaken ME?' we can rest in the surety that we are never forsaken. Even in our darkest hours, at bedside of the dying or graveside of the dead, in our own pain and loss and fear of death—especially there we may hear the trumpet of victory and hope. Such is the good news from Jesus, descendant of Isaac, doorway to Life."

*Understanding the Faith* is the inaugural volume in a new series of publications called *Presbyterian College Studies in Theology and Ministry*, edited by Principal John Vissers. What a splendid start to this new series! ■

*Rev. William Klempa is principal emeritus of The Presbyterian College, Montreal.*

# Respectful Attention

Everyday language illustrates theological ideas. BY JOYCE GLADWELL

## Theology for Non-Theologians

James Cantelon

John Wiley & Sons Canada Ltd.

**D**ear Mr. Cantelon,  
I thoroughly enjoyed reading your book. If I had tried to learn about the great theological themes by the standard route, I would have been immured in academic tomes for many months.

I am glad you were inspired to write briefly in everyday language, with wit and humour, and with a story to introduce every chapter, to catch my attention and light up your ideas.

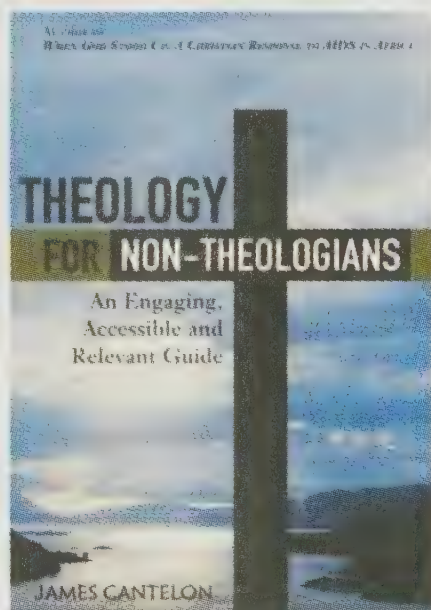
I learned a great deal, not just with my mind, but in my understanding of who God is, and I have come to feel more secure in my faith in God.

Your down-to-earth style worked wonderfully well in the section on the Trinity, for example, and I was surprised at how much I grasped in a few short pages on Revelation. It didn't work quite so well in the first chapter of the book with the arguments (a.k.a. proofs) that God exists. I was quite put out by the paragraph on the cosmological argument, and I almost gave up on the book right at the beginning. I was looking for a bridging sentence or two to link the heading "cosmological" with the explanation "all beginnings have a cause." Since cosmos means neither cause nor beginning, I could not see the connection between the two. There are other places in the book where, though I felt in tune with your insight and the direction you were taking, I was frustrated because there were gaps in your train of thought as you presented it on the page.

Let me remind you of some of the wise and insightful things you wrote:

About free will—that it is not freedom to do whatever I want, but rather it is "choice within boundaries," these boundaries being love for God, and love for neighbour.

About miracles—that "God is telling us something vital when He intervenes miraculously in our history."



About the Scriptures—that their trustworthiness, authority and inerrancy are all bound up with who Jesus is, "the perfect living Word, alive in the frail imperfect words of human beings."

You underscored for me that relationship, not pious observance, is the touchstone of godly living, when you introduced me to the Hebrew *zadkah*, meaning both righteousness toward God and justice toward one's neighbour.

You enlarged my understanding of sin and suffering, placing them squarely within God's plan. This is the insight that moved me more securely towards God.

The added bonus of your book is your summary of every book in the Bible: brief,

clear, lightly handled, while going to the core of each book. I found myself eager to find out what you would say about particular books—ones that raise questions for me, or just baffle me, like Revelation. I was consistently enlightened.

**I learned a great deal, not just with my mind, but in my understanding of who God is, and I have come to feel more secure in my faith in God**

Equally readable and enlightening is your treatment of Gnosticism as it arose in the early years after Christ, and as it appears today.

Your theological position lies firmly within orthodox Christianity, and your commitment to Jesus Christ and the God revealed in Scripture is obvious. At the same time you give respectful attention to other positions. I appreciate that. Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,  
Joyce

Joyce Gladwell is an elder at Gale, Elmira, Ont.



# A Journey of Recovery

A raw tale of an abused child.

BY OWEN THORNTON

## A Conspiracy of Love: Living Through and Beyond Childhood Sexual Abuse

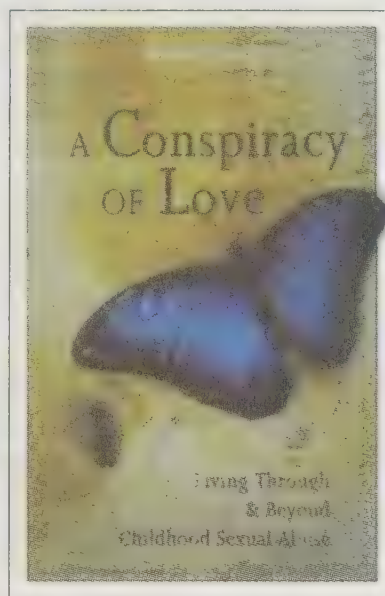
By Wendy Read

Northstone Publishing

**W**endy Read was sexually abused by her father. The damage done by daddy dearest caught up to her, as it does with all victims. "The demands of life grow and eventually there is simply not enough energy to keep all the bad feelings, disappointments and memories under control." Read had to deal with what happened. This book is a part of her process.

She writes of her struggle to understand the fifth commandment to honour her father and mother—one who abused her, while the other colluded through silence: "As the years went by, the weight of the commandment bent me low ... Silence. Freedom. Alone. Elsewhere. Cry. Wait. Night. This was the vocabulary I tucked safely away in an inside pocket of my being... There was a hollow place inside of me where my cries echoed endlessly. ...

One by one I heard their stories; rape, torture, humiliation,



death threats, drugs. One by one I experienced for the first time the powerful emotions that had been locked up for so many years: fury, despair, grief, friendlessness."

It was a long 20-year process for her to find a way to wholeness. Fully 130 pages later she writes, "But today my prayer, through grace, is this: that if, in heaven, the angels are dancing, they welcome and invite my father in."

Read at times does bleed on the page. It is raw; your skin crawls because you feel like you are in the room with these poor, dear children, watching as caregivers molest and rape them. But she also shows glimmers of hope and she uses the words of wellness.

"Now you have heard us question your wisdom and seen our indignant search for understanding. Now you are breaking into our prison snapping the bars we had reinforced with fear and shame." Truly she is on a journey of recovery and there is the promise of life after the abuse. ■

Owen Thornton is a frequent contributor to the Record.

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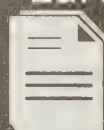
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# Unexpected Grace

For a congregation to be reborn, it first must die.

BY PETER COUTTS

## In *Dying We Are Born: The Challenge and the Hope for Congregations*

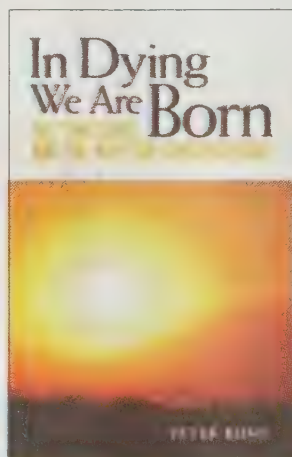
by Peter Bush

*The Alban Institute*

**“W**hat does it take for a congregation truly to know change in its life?” This is a question being asked in many Presbyterian congregations today. The title of Peter Bush’s new book, *In Dying We Are Born*, points to his answers. As he writes, “The congregation cannot give itself life, cannot make growth happen, and cannot stem the slide to death. The ability to do all of those things belongs to God alone ... The church must therefore humble itself to the point of death, and then and only then will it find itself raised to life by the power of God.” In other words, faithful, meaningful and significant new life can be granted by God only to congregations willing to die to the way they have been.

Bush acknowledges in his book that this is neither a common nor popular answer. Death, to us, is to be avoided at all costs. The large majority of books on congregational transformation, he says, assume that either the congregation is “mildly ill” (thus needing small change), or “seriously ill” (thus needing a new vision to fulfill). In contrast, Bush believes that a congregation must go even further. “At the heart of God’s plan is that death, all death, even congregational death, will be swallowed up in the victory of resurrection.”

If you have read books on church leadership and congregational change, you will quickly note that this book is different. It is because Bush wants us to take our theology seriously, even as applied to congregational change. This is not a how-to-do-it manual. Indeed, it reads more like a series of extended sermons, with each chapter including expositions of Scriptural passages. The theology is classically Reformed. In reminding the reader of the centrality of the resurrection for all life, Bush is encouraging congregations to put their hope for their future in God’s hands rather than in human ingenuity and effort. Bush believes that only a church willing to turn its back on its old life will be able to trust God to fulfill its hopes for a new life.



Consequently, the book is mostly an exploration of the process of such a congregational death and the subsequent experience of loss and grief. I found myself at times wanting the book to move on to talk of change and renewal, which are left to the very end. But the book models what it proposes: one must fully experience the slow movement towards loss and letting go before a congregation can arrive at the needed humility and openness to God. That, Bush asserts, is when resurrection can become something people anticipate and be open to.

Because Bush believes that true change can come only from God, he provides no processes for us to do this work. “Being raised from death to life is a complete surprise, unexpected grace.” Yet the stories he tells of resurrected churches all imply that at some level some kind of discernment took place in order to define God’s new life-giving direction for these congregations. Readers who wish to utilize this book will be served by formulating such a discernment process. The book also downplays the role of leaders in creating

**‘At the heart of God’s plan is that death ... will be swallowed up in resurrection’**

a renewed vision for their congregation’s future. “Leaders do not know when God might act ... Neither can leaders know what the newly raised-to-life congregations will look like. The shape of the new church is something God will determine.” Yet again in his illustrations we find congregational leaders who pray and study, propose and plan, and help the resurrection to happen. The book reminds us to first trust God for the future, but quietly acknowledges with Paul that we are God’s co-workers.

I read this book while travelling to a national meeting at which we spent significant time considering the struggles of many congregations and presbyteries. Death is something that is feared in church life. Bush asks us, “Why?” Given that we worship and serve a God who knows how to bring life out of death, churches should instead live their belief that “in dying we are born.” This book is a reminder that we should practice what we preach. ■

*Rev. Peter Coutts is minister at St. Andrew’s, Calgary. He is the creator of a leadership resource site for the Presbyterian Church in Canada, found at [www.coutts.name](http://www.coutts.name).*



# PWS&D Developments

The official newsletter of  
Presbyterian World Service & Development

June 2008 edition

PWS&D is the development, relief and refugee sponsorship agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

## Healthy Futures in India

In many of central India's remote villages, people often lack access to basic health care, primary education and opportunities for learning new skills. Families are unable to receive proper healthcare services due to the long distances to hospitals and not understanding what symptoms require medical attention.

But things are changing in Kheda'Khal. The village of fewer than 100 people is just one of many communities supported by PWS&D, realizing new opportunities for a healthy future. In partnership with the Church of North India, PWS&D is working with local community health volunteers (CHVs) to teach them new skills to share with their communities. The training includes vital subjects such as how to prevent illness, the importance of proper sanitation and clean water, literacy training, how to combat malnutrition, provide pre- and post-natal care, and work with local hospitals. The CHVs are also learning how to access government programs

that they would otherwise never have known about.

### Success stories:

- ♦ Meena was bitten by a dog and was unsure what to do. The local CHV, Ranu, explained that it was important to go to the hospital. The dog had rabies and because Meena went to the local hospital in Hatpiplya, she received the necessary treatment and was soon back with her family. When the dog passed away from the disease, Meena realized that the CHV had helped save her life.

- ♦ Mohan was in very bad shape. He had strange swelling in his feet and legs and had been suffering for some time. With the help of the CHV, Mohan was taken to the closest hospital. It was revealed that he had gangrene in his feet and had to have a toe amputated but his legs had been saved. Mohan is now feeling better and is very grateful to the CHV for explaining the importance of going to the hospital and taking him for treatment.

- ♦ Anar was struggling with chronic poverty as a widow without any sons. She was unable to continue paying her electricity bill but the CHV learned of a government program to help people below the poverty line. The CHV worked with



Dr. Dutta at Hatpiplya Hospital

Anar to complete the required forms and prove that she was living on less than \$10 per month. Anar is now able to receive free electricity and she can use her money for food and household necessities.

- ♦ Many community members were provided with seeds from a government program, thanks to the work of the CHV. Since most people in the community are illiterate, they were unaware of the program to help small farmers. The CHV was able to explain the requirements and help everyone fill in the paperwork so they could receive seeds for planting.

For many residents of Kheda'Khal, the only option for healthcare was the local witch doctor, and government programs to help impoverished communities were unheard of. But now, with the help of CHVs supported by PWS&D, the health of the community is improving and government assistance is utilized, creating real opportunities for the future.





# Congregations in Action!

## Canadian Churches Making a Difference

### Knox, New Westminster

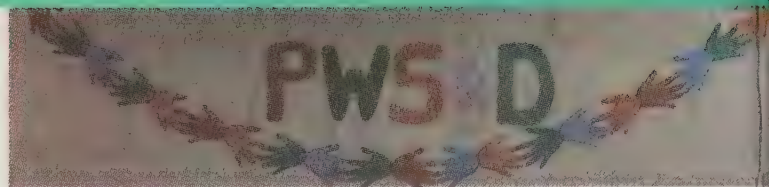
On Saturday, February 9, **Knox New Westminster in BC**, held a special dinner and fundraising event for PWS&D. The mission committee put on an exceptional event, with special



wall hangings and displays to educate people about the work of PWS&D and encourage support. Barb Summers, PWS&D Communications Coordinator, gave a presentation and participants were encouraged to make a special donation using "tickets" from a large murale of the world that highlighted PWS&D program countries.

The event was a huge success and raised nearly \$2,500 for PWS&D's work around the world!

*The Knox New Westminster Mission Committee: (left-right) Rev. Michael Koslowski, Sylvia Ingalls, Shelly Chandler, Victoria Chandler, Sarah Riedner and Marcia Douglas*



On Sunday, February 10, **St. James Church in Chatham, Ont.** held "The Great Shave Off" breakfast to celebrate a special fundraising campaign for PWS&D. All funds from the event went towards providing mosquito nets and helping prevent malaria.

The fundraiser was led by Sandee Brown-Davidson, and Rev. John Giurin agreed to shave his head in recognition of the congregation's exceptional fundraising efforts.

Ken Kim, PWS&D Director, spoke to the group about the work of PWS&D and was proudly presented with a cheque for an incredible \$17,200!



*Ken Kim, PWS&D Director, was presented with a cheque for \$17,200 by Sandee Brown-Davidson*



Before



After

*Tell us about your congregation's fundraising efforts!  
Call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 243.*





# Supporting Vulnerable Children in Malawi

Orphaned children in Malawi have a reason to believe in their future, thanks to the love and protection from people like Mary Macheso and the generous support of caring Canadian Presbyterians through PWS&D.

Women are the main caregivers in typical Malawian urban slum like Kolokoti. But Mary Macheso does more than just care for her own family. Mary noticed that children who have lost one or both parents due to AIDS are very vulnerable to abuse and mistreatments. The orphaned children are often left with extended family members, where families may be excessively large, or elderly grandparents are caring for young children when the few resources they have are already over-extended. Some orphaned children are left to be cared for by older siblings. These child-headed families are extremely vulnerable to property grabbing by other relatives, abuse and a lack of respect for basic human rights.

Witnessing the plight of orphaned and vulnerable children, Mary decided to mobilize her neighbours to look for solutions.

A committee was formed in 2005 and Mary became the chair of an Orphan Families in Crisis support group. The centre is a safe place for children to learn and play. Committee members volunteer their time to run a drop-in centre to reduce the stress of extended families that are providing care for these children. Committee members also contribute small amounts of money towards running the centre, as well as occasionally providing food and other services.

Mary does more than just provide food and shelter for these children—she is an advocate for them. Through the training she has received from the PWS&D supported program, Mary works hard within the intricate communal network where she lives, educating people to fight the stigma and discrimination that orphans and vulnerable children too often face.

The result is that communities

become sensitized to the problems of AIDS orphans and the hazards of survival for child-headed and extended families. The entire community becomes not only aware of the needs of orphan families in crisis, but they embrace them and feel responsible for their wellbeing. PWS&D is working to ensure the survival of child-headed families and vulnerable children through poverty-reduction strategies and community involvement. The program works to provide immediate relief combined with long-term strategies to bring about lasting change for a new future of hope and opportunity.



*Mary Macheso (front), sits with members of the Orphan Families in Crisis support group*





## Opportunities for Orphaned Children

Benson Khobili's father passed away when he was only 12 years old, followed by his mother two years later. With three younger siblings to take care of, Benson had no choice but to go out and look for ways to earn money.

Near Benson's home was a PWS&D supported community-based orphan care centre, and one day he knocked on their door and offered to do odd jobs around the grounds. He was welcomed in and was quickly recognized by his hardworking attitude and dedication. One of the centre's committee members, Mr. Nathaya, was so impressed with Benson that he referred him to the Orphan Families in Crisis (OFIC) program, part of PWS&D's work that provides opportunities to vulnerable children in

the country.

Benson started receiving support for school fees and his siblings were able to go to the orphan care centre while he attended school.

Benson was encouraged in his studies and Mr. Nathaya continued to be a friend and a mentor.

When Mr. Nathaya passed away in 2004, Benson felt like he had lost a parent all over again. But Benson remembered Mr. Nathaya's words of encouragement and remained a diligent student at school, studying hard and dedicating himself to learning.



*Children at the community-based orphan care centre*

Now at age 20, Benson has just started his first year as a pre-med student at the University of Malawi. Becoming a doctor is still a long and difficult journey ahead, but Benson is determined to succeed. He plans to make the most of the help he is able to receive from the OFIC program, and create a future with better opportunities for himself and his siblings.

*Benson Khobili (left) shakes hands with OFIC staff*



*Benson at the University of Malawi*



For more information or to make a donation, contact:



**Presbyterian World Service  
& Development**

50 Wynford Drive, Toronto ON M3C 1J7

416-441-1111 • 1-800-818-7301

[www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd)

[pwsd@presbyterian.ca](mailto:pwsd@presbyterian.ca)

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Editor: Barb Summers, Communications Coordinator

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Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I would like to receive PWSDevelopments regularly (free)

Please make cheques payable to PWS&D or make an online donation at [www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd).

PWS&D gratefully acknowledges all individuals and congregations who support the development, relief and refugee work of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.



# Against Empty Prayers

In support of Ontario replacing the Lord's Prayer.

BY JONATHAN SCOTT

It's not everyday that I am prepared to say "well done" to a politician. But Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty wins my support. The premier—cognizant of the diversity and freedoms of Ontario as the most culturally rich area of the world—wants to write a more appropriate public reflection for the legislature.

The Lord's Prayer is currently recited everyday before business is begun at Queen's Park. It's a nice tradition. Clearly, the members take the words to heart.

They greedily recite the phrase "give us this day our daily bread" and then proceed to get their bread, cake and ham from the trough of public finances through nice sleights-of-hand. They chant, "forgive us our debts" and then add "and don't mind if we use public funds to do so." And they certainly bring new respect to the word "hallowed" by drowning out their colleagues—and even the Lieutenant Governor, Her Majesty's representative—with revolting taunts, tantrums and honking in our democratic chamber.

Ontario—and Canada for that matter—isn't a theocracy. We aren't a society of one religion or one interpretation on a religion. We're a diverse, multicultural centre of tolerance and freedom. This dream of diversity is our best promise as a people. Embracing our collective strength is the best way to advance our society, economy and politics. Tax cuts and social programs are only good if our citizenship is strong and vibrant in optimism.

Everyone needs to feel a part of our community. A community is only truly worthy of its promise when everyone, every last person, is welcome, respected and valued. A prayer said in our democratic chamber should be democratic, reflective of our community.



The Lord's Prayer isn't a universal prayer. In traditionalist Christian circles, it forms the model of what should be in a prayer. Catholics recite what is written in the Bible; some Protestants add a nice additional summation. Some Christians shun the recitation of the prayer model as merely a way to appear a pious prat.

As Presbyterians, the prayer is embraced as a model of an ideal prayer. It is recited as a time-honoured part of our services.

The traditional prayer is nice. It encompasses what we would want to ask of a divine benefactor, a heavenly guardian. But not everyone agrees there is such an entity. We do need to be egalitarian in parliament, a place to represent everyone no matter their religious affiliation.

Is it a testament to a community to have the legislators blindly chanting words, attaching no meaning to their utterances, with some members standing by letting their colleagues say the meaningless syllables on their own? Is a thoughtless chant worthy of God?

A prayer should be reflective of the goals

and actions of the person praying. Anything less isn't a prayer; it's a ceremonial lie. There is enough lying in parliaments without affronting the ears of the divine too.

A moment of reflection, the singing of our national anthem—perhaps even a quick message of what the duties of a parliamentarian are—would be more fitting than meaningless recitations. Finding a more inclusive meditation is a worthwhile endeavour; it is a way to bring a community together around a common dialogue. Silence and thought works as well, a chance to focus the mind before dealing with business. If some collective recitation is required, something simple, something to remind our politicians what they need to work for, will suffice.

Words shouldn't be said without thought. We shouldn't insult Jesus' model of prayer by saying it without meaning. If politicians have nothing meaningful to say, they shouldn't say anything at all. ■

*Jonathan Scott is a Grade 12 student in Bradford, Ont., and a member of St John's.*



# 2008 Graduates

## Knox College MASTER of DIVINITY



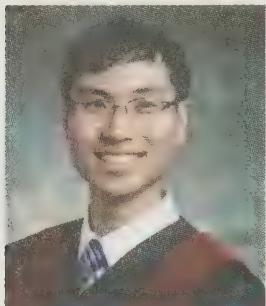
**Corey Ball**  
Diploma of the College  
St. John's, Bradford, Ont.



**Karen Dimock**  
Diploma of the College  
St. Andrew's, Guelph, Ont.



**Jennifer Geddes**  
Diploma of the College  
South Gate, Hamilton, Ont.



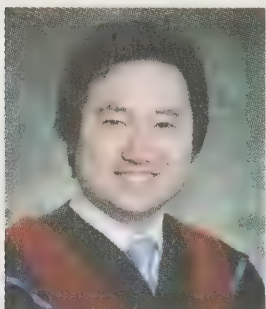
**Hyung-In Kim**  
Our Presbyterian Church  
(KPCA), Etobicoke, Ont.



**Scott McAllister**  
Diploma of the College  
Knox-Calvin, Harriston, Ont.



**Courtney Morris**  
Diploma of the College  
Beaches, Toronto



**Chang -Yong Park**  
Diploma of the College  
Dahdrim, Toronto



**Matthew Ruttan**  
Diploma of the College  
St. Andrew's, Toronto



**Mona Scrivens**  
Diploma of the College  
Grace, West Hill, Toronto



**Bradley Shoemaker**  
Diploma of the College  
Knox, Oakville, Ont.



**Emily Stares**  
Diploma of the College  
St. Paul's, Hamilton, Ont.



**Chol Jung Yong**  
Vancouver Hebron

## MASTER of DIVINITY (Honours)



**Seok-Jai Lee**  
Joyful Community, Toronto

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY *certification*



**Glenn McCullough**  
Knox, Spadina, Toronto



**Patricia Yorkden**  
Knox, Spadina, Toronto

## MASTER of RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



**Jennifer Carver**  
Central Queens United  
Pastoral Charge, P.E.I.



**Hyun Hwa Kim**  
Yum-Kwang Presbyterian  
Church(KPCA), Markham,

## DOCTOR of THEOLOGY



**Jinbong Choi**  
Tonghap, Presbyterian  
Church of Korea



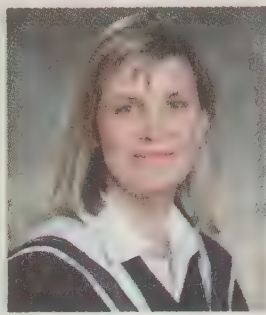
**Dong-Ha Kim**  
Toronto Korean



# MASTER of THEOLOGICAL STUDIES



**Ashley Barkman**  
Mount Olive



**Elisabeth Buffey-Needham**  
Walton Memorial United,  
Oakville, Ont.



**Elizabeth Campbell**  
Rosedale, Toronto



**Jo-Ann Dickson**  
Alexandra, Brantford, Ont.



**Enid Pottinger**  
St. Paul's, Hamilton, Ont.

## The Presbyterian College, Montreal



**Samer Kandalaf**  
*Certificate of the General Assembly for a Special Course of Study* Presbyterian Church, Homs, Syria



**Peggy Anne Kipfer**  
*Diploma in Ministry* Central, Cambridge, Ont.

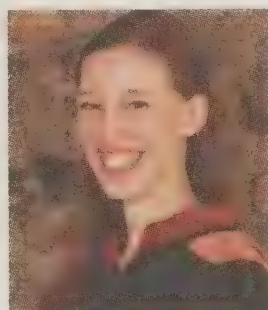


**Kenneth Wayne MacQuarrie**  
*Master of Divinity and Diploma of the College* St. Mark's, Charlottetown, P.E.I.



**Luke Vanderkamp**  
*Diploma in Ministry* Emmanuel, Schomberg, Ont.

## Vancouver School of Theology MASTER of DIVINITY



**Deborah May Kerr Stanbury**  
Richmond Hill, Ont.



**Beverley Y. Shepansky**  
St. Andrew's, Swift Current, Sask.



**Ming Jen Chiang**  
Vancouver Taiwanese

## MASTER of THEOLOGY



**Janet (Paddy) Eastwood**  
Richmond, B.C.

## MASTER of ARTS in THEOLOGICAL STUDIES



**Joshua (Jin Soo) Kang,**  
Presbyterian Church of Korea

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY



**Martin Baxter**  
Presbyterian Church in Ireland

*certificate for a special course of study*



# Called to Be

And ready to serve. BY KEN MACQUARRIE

Whenever I meet new people in my day-to-day life, our conversation usually begins with typical small talk about the weather or something else generally trivial. That is until the other asks "So, what do you do?"

My reply has often been, "I'm studying to be a minister."

To which they generally respond, "Oh, that's good to hear—our country needs good leaders."

And so I clarify, "No, not a politician; a minister in the Christian church."

Even people who are members of a church congregation are generally surprised, albeit pleased, to hear of my aspirations. It is not typical for young people today to seek the ministry, and so I am often asked, "Why do you want to do that?"

I suppose the best answer to this question is that I don't want to do that, I am called to do that. Ministry is not a career like most professions, but rather a calling or vocation—it is initiated by God, and responded to by the person and the church. In fact, God calls all Christians to be "ministers"

participating in God's ministry to the world. (1 Peter 2:9-12) And so, whether we are called to minister in business, or education, or caregiving, or the church, all Christians are called to a vocation which far surpasses our jobs or careers.

**It is not typical for young people today to seek the ministry, and so I am often asked, "Why do you want to do that?"**

The minister of Word and Sacrament is called to serve in the roles of teacher, preacher and leader and to lead the congregation in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. This is for the continual renewal and nurturing of the church for ministry.

I had my first inkling of a call to ministry when I was about 15 years old. It was not an earth-shattering event, just the simple thought, "I could be a minister." It's kind of hard to describe the feeling, but it seemed kind of foreign to me, as if the thought had not come from within, but from above. It was kind of confusing and kind of invigorating—I didn't quite know how to make sense of

it. And so I kept quiet about it.

However, as time passed I began to hear elders and congregation members from my church remark that I would "make a good minister." They were confirming the call that I had felt.

If I was confused before, I was scared now—"Me, a minister? I can't be a minister!" And perhaps that is the point—none of us, whether minister of Word and Sacrament or lay member of a congregation are capable of the ministry to which we are called. It is by the grace of God that we have the privilege of participating in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Having been called to the role of minister of Word and Sacrament, it is my passion to help the church to understand the gospel, seek to live according to it, and faithfully witness to it, that the congregation's "love may abound more and more." (Philippians 1:9) I look forward to the joys and challenges of joining alongside a congregation in worship and service, and sharing in life and ministry together. ■

*You can see Ken MacQuarrie's smiling face under the graduate listings from The Presbyterian College, Montreal, on the previous page.*



# The First Miracle

A severe cough, a young baby and a cold, cold room in Germany.

BY PATRICIA SCHNEIDER

**I**t was a small room, barely holding the single bed occupying it. The tiny casement window was a half-inch deep in frost and the room was bitterly cold.

Nearby, in her crib, our tiny year-old daughter was snuggled in her feather quilt, immune to the frigid atmosphere that permeated the room.

I cuddled up to my husband .... not only from affection but because the cold had chilled me thoroughly. I could feel another spasm of coughing surfacing. "Oh, no," I sighed, "not again." It was the fourth time that night.

Quietly I slid out of bed and headed for the kitchen, where a pan of water sat on a gas ring. I turned it up and a gentle steam slowly rose. Quickly I pulled a nearby towel over my head and breathed in the vapour. It was the only thing that relieved my coughing and gradually the spasm lessened.

What was I to do? I had been sick since we had been posted to Germany. It was just 10 years after the war and there was no accommodation anywhere. There was nothing available in the married quarters and all we could find to live in was a third floor walk-up in an unheated building. We had two tiny rooms (including a kitchen) and our own toilet, but the bathtub was on the lower floor and available only



once weekly. So many miles away from home; so sick and a baby to care for ... it was becoming a desperate situation.

The bronchitis that had haunted my childhood had reared its ugly head. I knew I couldn't carry on much longer. There had been weeks of coughing and wheezing. My chest ached, my head ached and my heart ached. Desperate, I cried out to God: "Please help me, Lord." Finally, I mopped up my tears, crawled in beside my husband and fell into an exhausted sleep.

My eyes were heavy when the alarm rang, but babies expect warm

bottles, so I pulled myself reluctantly out of bed and headed for the kitchen. I had mastered starting a fire from scratch and it didn't take long for the room to warm.

I bent over our daughter and gently lifted her, quilt and all. Her big blue eyes watched in anticipation as I reached for her warm bottle and I sat with my feet balanced on the open oven door enjoying the tiny bit of heat radiating from the oven. Tears fell as I held her close. My bronchitis was a chronic problem ... causing my own mother much grief years ►

# Wills that Changed the World

## William the Conqueror

Conquered England and turned the King's English into French

## William Tyndale

Translated the Bible into English

## William Shakespeare

English playwright and poet

## William Penn

English Quaker who founded Pennsylvania on  
the principle of religious freedom

## William Gates

Founder of Microsoft and co-founder of  
The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

## Alfred Nobel

Inventor of dynamite and founder of the Nobel Prizes

Surprised to find an Alfred among all the Wills? You shouldn't be. Sometimes our Last Will and Testament can be the most lasting legacy we leave behind. Alfred Nobel's will changed his legacy from "the man who invented dynamite" to "the man who founded the Nobel Prizes." With a stroke of the pen, Nobel changed the way we remember his name and turned the destructive power of dynamite into a force to help build a better world.

before. Her "goose-grease" chest rubs had never helped much and even steaming was no cure. But now I was the mother and a very sick one.

I could hear my husband getting dressed and glanced up as he came into the room.

"You've been crying and you look exhausted." His brow furrowed. He ate quickly, kissed us both goodbye and was out the door.

It was a quiet morning and long before I expected him for lunch I could hear his feet pounding up the stairwells and the door flew open.

"Eat your lunch, sweetheart, get the baby, and we are heading for the station. I've got an appointment for you with a specialist!"

I must have looked bewildered for he said again, "Come on ..." then explained: "I couldn't stand to see you sick any more, so I went to see the commanding officer about a compassionate posting home. He listened, made a quick phone call and arranged this appointment for you."

That was my first miracle of the day. God had heard my prayers. The second one was that afternoon. The specialist examined me and advised, "You don't have bronchitis, you have severe asthma." Then he added the wonderful words, "and we can help you get better."

So many years ago ... and God is still answering my prayers. ■

*Patricia Schneider lives in Grande Prairie, Alberta.*

## What is your legacy going to be?

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The Planned Giving Office, The Presbyterian Church in Canada  
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[www.presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving/willsandbequests](http://www.presbyterian.ca/plannedgiving/willsandbequests)

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[beautifulchurch@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:beautifulchurch@presbyterianrecord.ca)





# To Be Sent

If everything is mission then nothing is mission. BY CHARLES FENSHAM

Stephen Neill once said, “If everything is mission then nothing is mission.” The way we use the word “mission” around the church does perhaps reduce it to something so familiar that it loses its meaning. What is mission? In churches we speak of “mission statements,” or we talk about participation in a “mission project” when we make a trip to Central America to paint a school. Sometimes we speak of a “mission” when our congregation reaches out into the community in service and witness. Others in the church associate the word mission with something churches do overseas, and we tend to call our overseas church personnel “missionaries.”

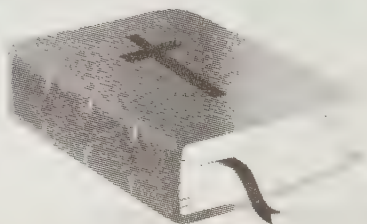
The word mission has a long and honourable tradition. It is the Latin form of the word we find in the New

Testament known as apostolic or apostle. As a verb, it simply means to be sent. In the context of the church and the Gospel, it means to be sent by God. Perhaps the most fundamental missionary text in the New Testament is to be found in the Gospel of John 20:21, when Jesus says to his disciples, “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you.”

This sending of the disciples has parallels in the other Gospels and the Book of Acts. John, however, describes God as the God who sends. In addition, in Jesus, God’s sending merges with God coming to us. Our God is a missioning God. God moves from inside who God is beyond God to us. This movement from inside God to us as God’s creatures became known as “The Mission of God” in the 20th century. The

famous Swiss theologian Karl Barth first described God in this way. In 1932, a time of great ferment after the First World War, Barth gave a lecture at the missionary conference in Brandenburg, Germany, in which he described mission as a matter of divine purpose—the mission of God. This small lecture would launch an idea that reverberates unto our day in Christian circles. Theologians soon turned the idea of God as the missioning God into a Latin phrase, *Missio Dei*, as they are wont to do. In 1938, at the large mission conference of the International Missionary Council in Tambaram, India, this phrase came into its own. There it became clear that the emphasis on the word mission should first of all be on the action of God and only secondarily on our actions or ►

## summer directory



### St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Toronto

(on King St. just West of University Ave.)

Sunday Worship at 10:30 a.m.

Thursday Communion 12:15 p.m.

Wheelchair accessible

Free public parking on Sundays  
University Ave., South of Wellington St.

Info: 416-593-5600

<http://www.standrewstoronto.org>

Senior Minister: Rev. William Ingram

### St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Victoria

downtown at Douglas and

Broughton Streets

For worship times call 250-384-5734  
or visit <http://standrews.pacificcoast.net>

Wheelchair accessible

Free public parking on Sundays  
in parkade behind church

E-mail: [standrewsvic@telus.net](mailto:standrewsvic@telus.net)

Minister: Rev. Ian Victor

Pastoral Visitor: Rev. Dr. Arthur Currie

### Vacationing in Montreal?

We invite you to worship with us at

Knox Crescent Kensington &

First Presbyterian

Sunday Worship: 10:30 a.m.

Child care available, Wheelchair accessible

6225 Godfrey Ave. (corner, Grand Blvd.)

N.D.G. 514-486-4559

Interim Moderator: Rev. Glynis Williams

### Moving to London for College or University?

A sincere invitation to attend

New St. James Presbyterian Church

280 Oxford St. E. at Wellington St. N.

London, Ontario

519-434-1127

Rev. Andrew Reid

July & August Worship: 10:00 a.m.

[www.newstjames.com](http://www.newstjames.com)

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missions in the world.

At that time, people were thinking of mission as something associated with churches in Europe and North America sending people to do mission overseas. However, very soon, after the Second World War, there was a deep process of self-examination that started to take shape in our churches. The fact that the "Christian nations" could so brutally kill each other made everyone question old assumptions about how "Christian" we really are. In addition, with the independence movement among colonies, a new awareness of the paternalism of the church and its resistance to supporting indigenous leaders started to surface.

John Gatu from Kenya called for a moratorium of mission. As people started to ask "what is mission?" the answer that mission is in the first place the mission of God started to gain more strength. Mission is not something we do to other people—mission is God's loving care and outreach to God's creation. We join that mission in our missional activities. With the forma-

tion of the World Council of Churches, the conversation continued about the meaning and significance of mission. In 1967, the WCC published two reports on the idea that each congregation is in its essence missionary. Biblical scholars

started to realize that the New Testament was written in the context of a missional church. The missional dynamic of the church became a key principle in helping us understand the New Testament. Theologians started to claim that mission is the mother of theology. It is no wonder that at that time Bishop Stephen Neill got a bit frustrated and uttered his famous complaint against everything becoming mission.

What then

is mission? How should we use the word? Next month we will look at some helpful definitions that may save us from Stephen Neill's complaint. ■

*Rev. Dr. Charles Fensham is professor of systemic theology at Knox College, Toronto. His latest book is Emerging From the Dark Age Ahead. This is the first of three articles on mission.*



**Mission is not in the first place something we do to other people—mission is God's loving care and outreach to God's creation**

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# A Tough Story to Tell

God's promise lives in the  
sacred soil of story.

BY LAURENCE JEVON



June 22: Genesis 21:8-21

I wonder if Isaac and Ishmael ever asked, "What would Dad do?" Their dad was the father of all Arabs, and the grandfather of Israel.

We all look back to Father Abraham. For Christians, it's a figurative connection. We say we're spiritual heirs. Arab Muslims, Christians, and Semitic Jews can climb down the branches of their family tree and find Abraham at the root.

Abraham's name means "father of a multitude," but it doesn't make him much of a father. Abraham and Sarah have God's promise. But a promise doesn't make a baby. When all attempts fail, they resort to an accepted family practice. If there's no son and heir, take another wife. Sarah

gives Abraham her slave, Hagar—who gets pregnant on the wedding night.

Sarah can't live with that. She orders Abraham to send Hagar into the wilderness, to die. Abraham does it. But God brings Hagar back to the family. A dozen years pass, and Sarah finally conceives.

We pick up the story at the party Abraham throws to celebrate his son's weaning. (Mothers, brace yourselves. In those days children were weaned sometime in their third year.)

Sarah has time on her hands now, and the penny drops. The family law that makes Hagar and her boy part of the family says Ishmael will inherit Abraham's estate. Abe is over 100, so that day will come soon.

Does this mean Ishmael will inherit God's promise, too? The promise of a

mighty nation, which will be a blessing to the whole world.

Abraham gives in to Sarah again. This time, God tells him it's the right thing to do.

The right thing? To tear your family apart? To send a woman you care for, and your firstborn son, out to die in the desert? Custom and family law allow it! But is it right?

Abraham obeys, on the promise God will look after Hagar and Ishmael. God does, but not until it looks like they're going to die.

Don't blame God here, and please forgive the Genesis storytellers. They have no choice, and they can't allow Abraham a choice. Isaac is their child of promise. From this point on it's Israel's story. Period.

But don't forget. Ishmael is a ➤

child of promise, too. That's another story.

Isaac's grandchildren wondered why they and their neighbours, often their enemies, looked so much alike. Even acted alike a lot of the time. They found their answer in the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar. I don't suppose it was a very helpful answer. As generations passed, Isaac's descendants forgot God's promise to Hagar. Isaac's spiritual kin, we Christians, haven't given our cousin Ishmael much notice. Some of us are afraid of his descendants, and call them our enemies.

This is a tough story to tell today. It reminds us that most of the Bible's

stories about marriage and family don't promote our family-values agenda. It also brings us smack-dab into the middle of one of the biggest

## Can Christians, Jews, and Muslims live together without strife?

problems in the world today. Can Christians, Jews, and Muslims live together without strife? This isn't just about Palestine. Or Iraq. Or Afghanistan. I live in Nova Scotia, where the second language used to be German. Now it's Arabic. In a place where the religious mix hasn't changed much in centuries, Islam is growing. Peacefully, but not without resentment and some

fear among the majority.

We make an absolute truth-claim about Jesus. We share this world with people who make other claims. Some, though not as many as we fear, assert their claims with violence. In the world's history, the days when the Church advanced its cause with the sword, are not long past. Today's reading reminds us that the seeds of fear, extremism, and violence grow well in the soil of sacred story. It also tells us God is free to make promises to whom God will. Would we all be better neighbours if we remembered God has a purpose for us all? ■

*Rev. Laurence DeWolfe lives in Halifax.*

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PHIL CALLAWAY

# Drawn to the Church

Like moths to a flame.

BY PHIL CALLAWAY



On a recent Sunday night I returned from a trip and noticed that the customary sparkle in my wife's eyes had been replaced by sadness. "I have bad news," she said, putting an arm around me. "Cordell is gone. Killed in a car accident."

I slumped to the floor in disbelief. "No," was all I could manage. My friend. One of my biggest encouragers. Gone. It couldn't be.

On Friday morning, I had talked with him.

"This is the happiest day of my life," he had said. "I've given the family business over to my son. I'm ready for the next step." A few hours later he had taken that step—into the presence of God.

The world slows down remarkably when a friend dies. Things you once thought important don't mean a

thing. Things you worried about yesterday vanish today. Money won't buy what you want and sometimes you find yourself wishing for five more minutes to say what you didn't say when you know you should have.

Sometimes you can measure a man's influence by the volume of cigarette butts in the church parking lot at his funeral. There were plenty at this one. Fifteen hundred people don't ➤



# CALLAWAY

show up to much in a small town, but they gathered to say goodbye today. Many were "pre-Christians," as Cordell liked to call them. Dozens considered him their best friend. As a member of what the insurance world calls the Million Dollar Round Table, Cordell had worked hard and experienced much of what we call success. But he always seemed to have time for people. Teenagers in our town called him their mentor. He was my high school hockey coach, my cheerleader, and one of my biggest fans.

"Who makes a humourist laugh?" someone once asked me. "Guys like Cordell," I replied. "My father was part Scotch," he told me over a glass of Pepsi a week before his death, "part Ginger Ale."

This morning as we left for the funeral, I told my sons I would pay them a dime for every adjective they wrote down that was used to describe Cordell. Their pockets are jingling tonight.

"He loved God and he loved baseball," wrote my son Stephen. Comforter. Encourager. Servant. He was honest in business. He enjoyed life.

When my wife and I were first married, Cordell took us out for lunch hoping to sell us life insurance. And he told us that no matter what our decision the very best life insurance policy wasn't for sale. The assurance that we can live forever with Jesus by simple faith in God is the best present we'll ever receive and free for the asking. It is a message that has changed our lives.

Hours before Cordell's death I spent some time on the phone with one of my favorite authors, Philip Yancey. He was talking about people who have increased his faith and helped him survive hypocrisy in the church. We compared notes a little. Our backgrounds have similarities, yet both of us find ourselves drawn to the church like moths to a flame. Sometimes we experience the light. And sometimes

we get burned. But certain ones along the way keep bringing us back. They are the tail wagers. The Cordells.

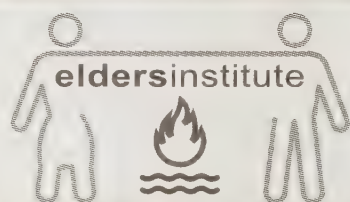
I wish for every church a Cordell. For every community and every home. If something blessed him, he said so. He couldn't sing to save his life, nor could he change a light bulb. But he could light up your face with a compliment. He looked past your faults and embellished your attributes. He used exclamation marks when he described you. I picture him walking around heaven now, patting angels between the wings, saying, "Wow! Good job! You're amazing! You've been doing this how many years?"

"Let's get together soon," were Cordell's last words to me.

One day soon I'll keep that appointment. I can hardly wait. ■

*Phil Callaway is editor of Servant magazine and the author of 15 books. Visit him online at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com)*

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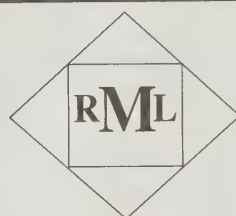
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# Agreeable Disagreement

Unity grows from within; uniformity  
is forced from without. BY DAVID WEBBER

A couple of years back, a red squirrel moved into our doghouse. He is a charming, cheeky little fella and I like him very much. Shortly after moving in, he filled our large, insulated doghouse with cones and twigs and built a tunnel system under the entire fenced dog run. I think the tunnel system is filled with cones as well. I am not sure why he did this, because he appears to dine out almost exclusively at our perpetually stocked bird feeders.

Things were going well for Squirrely until this spring. In early May, a rather large and equally cheeky bluejay decided to share dining facilities with Squirrely on a permanent basis. At first, all hell broke out. It made for great entertainment. We spent many wonderful hours watching Squirrely and Jay hurl themselves at each other trying to maintain sole control of two birdfeeders at one time. When they were totally exhausted they would stand almost nose-to-nose, cussing

like mad, each in his own language. Once rested, the combatants would go back at it again until they were ready to drop with fatigue. The whole spectacle was delightful to watch, even for the tiny chickadees who filled the bleachers in the massive spruce tree that shelters our two bird feeders. They flitted in for refreshments at intermissions while Squirrely and Jay were glaring at one another with mutual hate.

And then things changed. Jay and



Squirrelly still disagreed about who controlled the bird feeders, but they agreed to disagree. One would feed at one bird feeder while the other would feed at the neighbouring one a mere six feet away. When the mood would hit one of them, they would swap bird feeders and barely miss a feeding beat. Occasionally glares would be exchanged, but for the main part the two had reached a state of agreeable disagreement. And it wasn't much fun to watch anymore.

It has, however, provided me with much food for theological reflection. One of the things that I have found hard to cope with is how disagreement is handled in the strange environment of the church. It seems to me that the norm within the church is that when there is disagreement the parties feel compelled to tear one another apart, either directly or indirectly. The point seems to be to get the other party to conform to "my way of seeing things." It makes for great entertainment for those watching from outside the church but it is hugely tiring, destructive and distracting for those within, most particularly the principal pugilists. And it doesn't seem like church people have the ability to easily or quickly get to the stage of agreeable disagreement and get on with the life and work of Christ's church, which is the whole point of being church together.

It seems to me that much of the problem stems from a lack of appreciation for the difference between unity and uniformity. In Jesus' great prayer for his disciples, he prays three times for unity, "... that they may be one ..." (Jn.17.11,21,23) He did not pray for uniformity. Warren Wiersbe writes: "The unity that our Lord prayed for is not institutional or organizational. It is spiritual: 'that they may be one, just as We are.'" (Jn.17.22) Unity grows from within; uniformity is forced from without. Unity is living, it grows and expands; but uniformity is dead and brittle, and the least jarring thing breaks it.

Unity allows for variety and diversity, but uniformity demands conformity. Unity is based on love and thrives on love, but uniformity is defensive and is based too often on fear.

You see, here is the thing. Christian unity is based upon me loving Christ enough, to love you enough, to let you be different ... to let you have different points of view ... to let you have different ways of seeing things.

### **I have found it hard to cope with how disagreement is handled in the strange environment of the church**

The one and only thing we have to agree upon is Christ, loving Him and loving each other. Everything after that can be agreeable disagreement as we get on with serving the Master. And it strikes me that if a squirrel and a bluejay can do it, surely to God you and I can do it too.

Seemingly this is a hard thing for Presbyterian Christians to accept, particularly the teaching and ruling elders. The court system of our church is based on an adversarial model. The whole point seems to be to focus on what we disagree on and then use the tongue to whip the other person into conformity. But a closer look at our polity reveals it really is a system to get to agreeable disagreement. The point of debate is not to force conformity but to explore all sides of an issue. Once all sides of an issue have been exposed, there is supposed to be a vote that allows the Holy Spirit to have the sway and liberates the members of the meeting to love one another enough to agree to disagree. The failure of our system is when we forget where we are all supposed to end up.

'Tis the most Presbyterian of seasons, the season of the church year known as General Assembly week. "God, help us all to remember where we are all supposed to end up." ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry.*



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# Called to Wonder

CREATED BY ERIN WALTON

God created all of the months and seasons, but He truly made June extra special with Father's Day, the first day of summer and the start of summer vacation all in one month!

And since you're giving up reading, writing and 'rithmetic, why not make some time for these three R's during your summer vacation:

1. **Reducing** is to prevent waste by consuming and throwing away less. Some ideas are:
  - refill your water bottles at home instead of buying bottled water
  - purchase durable, long-lasting goods
2. **Reusing** is when you find a use for an existing item. Try:
  - decorating a bag and using it as a gift bag instead of buying wrapping paper
  - turning a used box into storage
  - decorating a can to hold pencils
3. **Recycling** is when an object can be shredded, melted or otherwise processed and then turned into new raw material.  
You can...
  - Deposit your tin cans, glass bottles, cardboard, paper and plastic into blue recycling bins instead of garbage cans
  - Return your pop bottles and juice boxes to the bottle depot for a refund



Another important "R" for summer is Rest.

We have to remember to make time for rest on summer vacation; after all, we've been working hard all year. Even God took time to rest on the seventh day after He worked so hard at creating the world. While you're resting this summer, think about God and the beautiful planet He created. Do what you can to care for it just as God cares for us. Remember to give God your worries and fears this summer and always so you can truly rest.

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28*

Have a great summer!

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## **Obituaries**

**CRABTREE**, Alan Robert, at Errinrune Nursing Home, Thornbury, Ont., on Nov. 8, 2007, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. He was in his 74th year, a church organist and the husband of Eleanor Knott Crabtree.

**DI GANGI**, Mariano, BA, BD, M.Th, DD, died peacefully on March 18, 2008, in his 85th year. Pastor, preacher, professor, an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, for 62 years he served Beckwith Memorial, Montreal, Que., St. Enoch's, Hamilton, Tenth Presbyterian, Philadelphia, and Knox, Toronto, Ont. He was for a time convener and executive secretary of the board of evangelism and social action of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and a member of the special committee that produced the "Declaration of Faith Concerning Church and Nation." He was executive director of Interserve for 20 years and taught pastoral studies at Tyndale Seminary, retiring as professor emeritus. Many activities and organizations were blessed by his God-given talents, including the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, of which he was president from 1969 to 1971, but especially dear to his heart were global missions, Puritan preachers and evangelism in Italy. Mariano wrote many books on these and other subjects of interest.

He is survived by his much loved and devoted wife "Jo" (Ninette Maquignaz) and their three children: John (Vicki), Marian Archibald (Rev. Jack) and Peter (Sheila) all of Ottawa, Ont. As well, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren cherish his memory.

**GRAHAM**, James Stanley, 97, of Rockfield, Pictou County, N.S., passed away on Feb. 17, 2007, in Aberdeen Hospital, New Glasgow, N.S. Born in Rockfield, he was a son of the late Albert E. and Mary J. (MacLeod) Graham. A farmer and avid gardener all his life, Stanley was an active member of West River Presbyterian Church, Durham. He had been an elder from 1952 to 1990

and served as clerk of session from 1978 to 1990. He was also a choir member and former Sunday school superintendent.

Charitable work was very important to Stanley and he was recognized by the United Way for his many years of work and support. He was also a life member of the Canadian Bible Society. A descendant of the Grahams who had first settled Rockfield in 1817, Stanley had a great love of genealogy. He was a life member of the Clan MacLeod Society and had served as its secretary-treasurer. He was the author of several local history books, including one of the Durham Church, and his vast knowledge of the community was called upon by people all over North America.

Stanley was the last surviving member of his immediate family and is survived by several cousins. Besides his parents, he was predeceased by brother Calvin and sisters Katherine and Mary in infancy.

Stanley will be greatly missed by his church family and the community.

**KELLY**, Giollo Gaw, B.A. M.Div, D.D., died Feb. 24, 2008, at her home after a brief illness. Giollo was born in Northern Ireland but moved to Saskatoon, Sask., as an infant where she and her family were active members of Parkview Presbyterian Church. She moved to Toronto in 1952 to take up a position as secretary for Dr. James Alan Munro in the Board of World Missions, and that began 48 years of work for the Presbyterian Church in Canada in various positions until her retirement in 1990 at which time she was Secretary for Canada Operations.

Giollo was very involved in the work of the WMS both locally and nationally. She was an elder at St. John's, Toronto, and organized worship services at Riverdale Hospital (now Bridgepoint Health) for some 40 years. She graduated from Knox College in 1980 and was honoured by having a D.D. conferred upon her in 2006.

A faithful servant of her Lord, she will be missed by many whose lives she touched.

**MILLARD**, David "Dave" Raymond. With great sadness, the Session of New St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Dover, in the Presbytery of Chatham Kent, Ont.,



announce the death of David "Dave" Millard, Clerk of Session. Dave died on Feb. 7, 2008, at London Health Sciences Centre from injuries following a car accident.

He was a life-long farmer, involved community member and friend to many. He possessed an infectious Christian spirit, bringing many new members to the church family with friendship and happiness. He comes from a long family history of elders and clerks of session and believed in preserving the soul and spirit of the country church community.

He was the husband of Janet for 47 years and father to Tom and Dianne; Eric and Mandy; Alec and Jim and Michelle. He was a special grandfather to Sarah, Lindsay, Nicole, Jarret and Kenton. He also will be missed by brothers Robert and Jack; and by brothers- and sisters-in-law and their families.



**SMITH, Reverend Gilbert David**, Oct. 14, 1913 – Jan. 16, 2008. Born in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, and educated at Foyle and Magee Colleges, Londonderry, he studied theology at New College, Edinburgh. As a young man his faith was deeply influenced by layman T. S. Mooney. He ministered at Trinity, Bangor and Magheragall, having an amazing rapport with young people. In 1953, he came to Canada and helped found St. Giles Presbyterian Church, Peterborough, Ont. Next he ministered in Brantford, Ont., and Mount Pleasant, Ont. After two years in New Zealand, Gilbert served at Trinity Presbyterian Victoria, B.C. (1967-1981). In retirement he served as Minister Emeritus at Trinity and helped many congregations while they were vacant. Gilbert was a keen sportsman and always combined his ready sense of humour and Christian witness to touch lives on golf greens, cricket pitches and grass hockey fields. His complete obituary may be read at [www.canada.com/victori-atimescolonist/htm](http://www.canada.com/victori-atimescolonist/htm). ■



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Date	Speaker	From	Topic/Scripture
June 25	Marion Taylor Associate Professor of Old Testament	Wycliffe College, Toronto, ON	<i>The Night of a Dream</i> Genesis 28.10-22
July 2	Hans Kouwenberg Pastor	Calvin Presbyterian Church, Abbotsford, BC	<i>The Night of Deliverance</i> Exodus 12.1-36
July 9	Kevin Livingston Senior Minister	Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto, ON	<i>Nights of Discernment</i> Judges 6.33-7.25
July 16	Richard Topping Senior Minister	The Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal, PQ	<i>The Night of Desperation</i> 1 Samuel 28.3-25
July 23	Greg Scharf Associate Professor and Chair of Pastoral Theology	Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL	<i>The Night of Reckoning</i> Daniel 5.1-31
July 30	Donna Petter Assistant Professor of Old Testament	Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston, MA	<i>The Night of Nights</i> Luke 2.1-20
August 6	Donald Carson Research Professor of New Testament	Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL	<i>The Night of Questions</i> John 3.1-21
August 13	Victor Shepherd Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology	Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON	<i>The Night of Betrayal</i> Luke 22.39-62
August 20	John Vissers Principal	The Presbyterian College, Montreal, PQ	<i>The Night of Astonishment</i> Acts 12.1-19
August 27	Dennis Ngien Research Professor of Theology	Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON	<i>Night No More</i> Revelation 21.1-22.6

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# It's a Calling, Not Career

The 133rd moderator returns to his life. BY REV. DR. J. H. HANS KOUWENBERG



It's been a good, yet busy year. I continued as the pastor of my congregation, overseeing its continuing worship, witness and work, while engaging local, regional and national duties. True, my workload doubled and my emails tripled as I tried to fulfill my goal to lift up the local church by preaching and teaching in as many places as I could, but I also had fun. I avoided as many meetings as possible, except for the Assembly Council. Regretfully, there were a few invitations I couldn't fulfill, but for the most part it was an enriching and encouraging year.

I learned again how valuable it is to be well organized, well prepared, well supported and well loved. Although I've been away from home for 26 Sundays and, sometimes in addition, several weeks at a time, my congregation, Calvin Church in Abbotsford, British Columbia, and my wife, Colleen, have been fabulous. Rick Fee, the General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, who has also been a moderator, told me that if I had any light bulbs to change before this year it would have been good to have done

that before I began! Yet, in spite of travels across Canada, in Africa, to Korea and Scotland, I've had time to do a few things around the house, including shovelling my driveway a few times this winter and mowing my lawn this spring. I continued to have some balance in my life.

I'm grateful for the energy and the health God gave me to do what I have done. I'm grateful for the opportunity the church gave me in electing me as the Moderator of the 133rd General Assembly, and I'm grateful for all those who blessed me in my journeys and visits with their prayers, welcome, and affection.

Chatting with my colleague, chaplain and friend, Bruce Cairnie, at lunch a few weeks ago, we talked about some of the stresses and the struggles that ministers face. I, too, have seen some of that on my trips to a number of churches and meetings with pastors. In spite of associate and support staff in the congregation, and colleagues in the presbytery, ministry can be a very lonely and often discouraging business. It's difficult to be a minister in a diminishing denomination where congregations often seem concerned only about "keeping the doors open" and maintaining some form of "religious exercises." Yet I go back to my congregation with enthusiasm. Many things have continued, and even some new things have happened, while I have been gone—without me needing to worry about how it will get done.

Committed and gifted elders and other lay people have carried on.

I love the gospel ministry of Jesus Christ. I enjoy sharing my faith with other people and teasing them to "come and see" what Jesus does in church, and among Christians who faithfully gather to celebrate His presence, study His Word and impact God's world. I love to be a partner in the conversation with those who rejoice and those who grieve. I love to plumb the Bible's heights and depths. I love the various experiences with which God privileges the general practitioner preacher and pastor-teacher.

Some say being moderator is "the pinnacle of a person's career"—but that isn't the way I've looked at it or tried to fulfill its call. True, I've been honoured and blessed, but I do not have a career; I have a calling to be a minister of the gospel. It's been very good to have served you as moderator as best as I have been able, but I have a life and a wife and children and a church and a community to continue to serve.

So I go back to where I came from—with great gratitude, and with faith and with hope and with love. ■

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. H. Kouwenberg".

Rev. Dr. J. H. (Hans) Kouwenberg  
Moderator of the 133rd General Assembly  
The Presbyterian Church in Canada



The Moderator of the  
133rd General Assembly  
preaching at Roxdale  
Toronto in December.



“I enjoy sharing my faith  
with other people

and teasing them to ‘come and see’ what Jesus does in church, and among  
Christians who faithfully gather to celebrate his presence.”



July 10, 2008

Dear John Calvin,  
Happy 499th birthday  
from The Presbyterian  
Church in Canada.  
We're looking forward  
to the big celebration  
next year!

Nice of them to remember.  
Where is Canada, anyway?

Nicholson





EYE WITNESSES IN BURMA | MISSION & DISCERNMENT CONTINUED

# PRESBYTERIAN Record

July/August 2008

## General Assembly

A call for change



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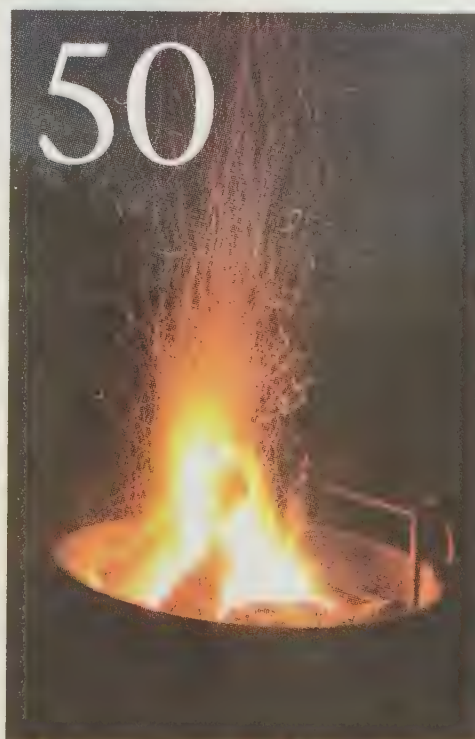


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On the Cover: Photo Montage by  
Andrew Faiz. Assembly photogra-  
phs available on *Record* website.





# PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

The three Abrahamic religions are called to love God. BY DAVID HARRIS

Here's the scenario: New neighbours move in next to you in southern Alberta. Their car sports a Pittsburgh Penguins decal. You are a Calgary Flames fan. How do you welcome them?

Should you: a) tell them it's great to have new neighbours but they should know that every one around them are Flames fans? b) say, wow, how could you have been so mistaken! Of course Sydney is the greatest and you'll patch over all your Flames stuff right away? c) tell them it's great to have hockey fans for neighbours. Joke about the teams but invite them over for a barbecue and help them move in?

Alright, it's a version of three guesses, first two don't count. So why is it so hard to do this when it comes to our other religion (otherwise known as Christianity)?

I pose this because it more or less defines the thin debate at General Assembly about responses from the ecumenical and interfaith committee to a number of overtures received since last assembly.

That was the one where, after a much longer debate and committee-of-the-whole discussion, the mandate of the ecumenical and interfaith committee was changed to officially acknowledge that the church talks to people of other faiths.

This change was (and is) opposed by some who, one is obliged to assume, believe the role of the committee is to evangelize those of other faiths and, secondly, that when a Presbyterian meets a person of another faith, the first thing one should do is talk to them about the "doctrine of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ."

Because that's what happened at assembly. The debate was hijacked and the answer to all the overtures was that assembly affirms this doctrine. Yet no such doctrine of the church is to be found. And, no reference was made to the Westminster Confession or any other subordinate standard.

The church's theologians were aghast. Conversations after the debate suggested that fear was behind the move. Fear that Christianity is watering itself down in accommodation and fear that Muslims are coming into Canada in such numbers that Islam is the country's fastest growing religion.

Meanwhile, as this issue of the *Record* goes to press, about



200 international religious leaders from the three Abrahamic faiths will be meeting in Madrid hosted by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia.

In the words of a writer in *The National*, a newspaper in Abu Dhabi, the king's call was "quite timely, given the degree of religious misunderstanding that there is in the world."

That's a bit of an understatement, not least in the Saudi kingdom itself where an Israeli entry visa in your passport is a bar from entering and

where all non-Muslim prayer in public is banned.

Or, as *The National* article diplomatically put it, "Religion has always been a central driver of social and political change, particularly in the Middle East, and any effort to open up interfaith exchanges could be extremely helpful in defusing the potentially serious consequences of conflicts between the different communities."

We live in hope. But, as the author, a dean of a university communications school in the United Arab Emirates, notes: "The Holy Quran urges Muslims to talk to People of the Book (Verse 64 of Al Umran chapter): "O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allah."

And on that, we all agree. Among the Christian leaders will be American evangelist Franklin Graham (son of Billy) and Anglican archbishop Rowan Williams. The World Jewish Congress has said it plans to be at the table as will Rabbi David Rosen, former chief rabbi of Ireland, a member of the American Jewish Committee and an international president of the World Conference of Religions for Peace.

Meanwhile, Presbyterians in the United States agreed at their recent assembly "that Christians, Jews and Muslims may hold different understandings of how God has been revealed to humankind, but all three groups are called to love God and neighbor and care for the poor. That means Presbyterians ought to be in conversation with Jews and Muslims, celebrate religious holidays together and even set aside days to worship together—all to promote understanding, respect and goodwill.

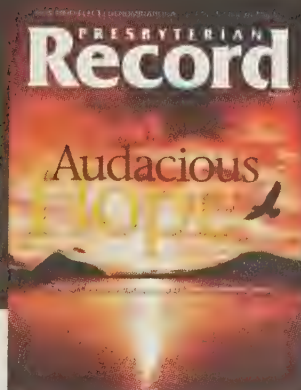
So where are we now? ■

David Harris



# Letters

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## PRESBYTERIAN Record

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## Cover up

I received the June *Record* and was appalled at the cover. Do you think this Christian magazine should be placed in my grandchildren's hands? How can you justify putting a pin-up girl on the cover of what I thought was a Christian magazine? "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap".

G. SHIRLEY BURRILL, CALGARY, ALTA.

I was shocked. What were you thinking?

J. BENNER, ORILLIA, ONT

## An injustice to higher-ed

*Re Ministers Mix It Up, May.*

Emigrants came because there was no land for sale in their country and since Canada needed farmers they came here to work and to farm. Ministers came also so they could look after their flock.

We had a hard time after Hitler took over Holland but after the war we never had a bad time. The Netherlands was always a rich country and I hope it will always be that way.

MRS. J. VINKE, GLENCOE, ONT.

The article states that after the Second World War ministers from Ireland couldn't find work because of their limited educational background and the surplus of clergy. My father was one of those ministers who immigrated to Canada with his family in 1951. He had served churches in Northern Ireland for 16 years. He graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, a highly reputable university, with his BA before attending Presbyterian College in Belfast. He completed his MA in the late 50s.

For the author to make a blanket

statement is an injustice to those who completed higher education.

ALEXANDRA HUNTER, VIA EMAIL

## Core affirmed

It was heartening to read John Vaudry's letter in May protesting Laurence DeWolfe's statement that Jesus became the Son of God at His baptism (January). Vaudry declares the issue raised by DeWolfe's view to be for more serious than the current concern about homosexuality in the church.

It is indeed. Not only does it strike at "the core of our faith" but also is a challenge to the integrity of Presbyterian ministers "who sign a statement that they are in substantial agreement with the Westminster Confession of Faith." Surely preaching or writing what is in clear contradiction of the ordination vows is intellectual dishonesty—even heretical.

The question now is: Will anything be done about this "serious issue" by the appropriate body in the Presbyterian Church or will inaction be permitted to foster a subtle erosion of faith in the church over time? Hopefully, not the latter.

REV. JIM PHILPOTT, PERTH, ONT.

Virtually all Christians agree that Jesus was baptized by John and at that time received the Holy Spirit. And virtually all Christians have the Resurrection at the core of their belief. Then many part company in their interpretation of scripture.

To say that we could receive the same indwelling of the spirit when "two or more are gathered together" may be presumptuous. But it's true. Ask any ➤



## Pontius' Puddle

JOEL KAUFFMAN@AOL.COM

practicing Pentecostal or better still ask anyone in any congregation who has experienced the same. The debatable part is the question: Was Jesus truly human when God chose Him to spread the Gospel and promise ever lasting life? Was Jesus God Himself? That being said, John Vaudry in his letter mentioned "a minister of a church is required to sign a statement that he is in agreement with the Westminster Confession of Faith."

It begs the question: Should all churches require the same obligation of

their members? Various fundamentalist denominations think so. But by doing so, I believe, encourages a subtle form of hypocrisy. More than one person has told me of their beliefs which were contrary to church doctrine and could not be openly discussed with other church members especially not with their pastor—a sad situation.

The direct result of adhering to a very strict dogmatic persuasion and surrendering your will to a person rather than to God is the formation of sects, many of a destructive nature.

Think of Jim Jones mass suicides or the Davidian carnage at Waco. But the good news of the Gospel is that if we have God given love in our spiritual core as advocated by Jesus, spiritual fulfillment will prevail.

J. GORDON NEAL, WHITBY, ONT.

### Gaia clarified

*Re God's Creation, April editorial*

I appreciated the message that God's work of resurrection and renewal is an example for our treatment of creation. There's a detail, not central to the argu-

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ment, that might be better explained, however—the Gaia hypothesis is not the belief that Earth is a living goddess who takes care of her inhabitants (this idea predates it, in any case). The Gaia hypothesis is a scientific theory, developed by Lynn Margulis and James Lovelock, that claims the Earth acts as a living being in which all systems work together to regulate the climate. The idea of this Gaia became mingled with then-trendy New Age-type beliefs, but that does not seem to be the researchers' original intent. Of course, Christianity has often been similarly simplified and misinterpreted by popular culture.

KIRSTEN SHUTE, DORVAL, QUE.

## A part of our history

*Re Response to Against Empty Prayers*

I, like Jonathan Scott, am against empty prayers.

I have traveled to other countries and always respected their traditions in cultural matters and in their religion. It's sort of like, "when in Rome do as the Romans do!"

If I chose to live in one of these foreign countries, do you think they would change their traditions for me or for that matter a group of Christians? Perhaps that is what makes Canada such an attractive country for other cultures that choose to live here. Everyone is free to do as they please, even to changing the traditions that this country was founded on.

If all members of the parliamentary system in Ontario and Canada are to know what is going on in the chambers, they must speak and understand English. This being the case they all could in reverence and respect for the founding fathers of our country, bow their heads for the time it takes to recognize our country's tradition and the fabric it was built on, even if they are from another faith or culture. Pray for our province and our country that there be some to fill that emptiness in communing with God in the reciting of The Lord's Prayer.

ANNE RUSSELL, BRAMPTON, ONT.

First of all, the governments served by both McGuinty brothers at Queens Park and Ottawa don't want any religious schools in Ontario except Catholic.

Second, the provincial Liberals are made up of University socialist professors and elitists. Who if I am not mistaken have no use for religion in any shape or form.

As to the Lord's Prayer, it is a very benign prayer and is against no one. It asks for daily help from a deity. This country was founded on Judeo-Christian values. Why should we change for the new immigrants? Even Muslims pray to Allah, who of course is God.

When McGuinty says he is reflecting the changing values, well, he is not telling the truth. He wants to get rid of the Lord's Prayer because it makes him feel guilty for the not so nice things he has done.

LESLIE R. IRVINE, MISSISSAUGA, ONT.

## With respect

I keep reading *Sharing The Love*, February, by Rev. Calvin Brown.

Initially his words gave me hope. Hope because I learned that my church had invited Imam Hamid Slimi to speak at the last General Assembly, surely indicating that we wanted to learn more about the faith and customs of our Muslim neighbours.

Brown goes on to remind us that we are to treat all people with respect, to follow Christ's teaching to love our

neighbour as ourselves. We need to protect their right to freely express their faith, the same as we desire the freedom to express ours. This, however, "is a long way from affirming their faith as having equal saving value as faith in Christ" he says.

Suddenly my hope diminishes, for now the truth begins to seep out and I have a sense that I am to accept the view that the Muslim faith is not on a par with Christianity in its saving capacity. That is not all however, for Brown continues to write that to "affirm their faith as of equal value in reconciling us with God is patently unchristian".

These are the words that have been repeated in my mind now for weeks. I am startled, puzzled and then appalled because I realize that with my simple mind I am one of the "patently unchristian" persons who does not believe that God shows favouritism. He/She is a loving God that no religion can claim to be solely theirs.

Yes, let us reach out and learn about other faiths and customs rather than fear our neighbours. And let us continue to learn just what it means to be Christian.

SUSAN MACRAE, GLEN HAVEN, N.S.

## Also on our website:

Additions to the Theological iPod by Andrew Faiz's June article. And a defense of theistic evolution. ■

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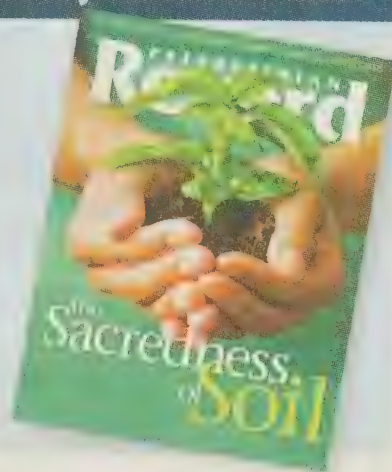
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# People & Places

To make People & Places submissions: [peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca). Please visit the monthly PnP page at [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca) for more.



St. Paul's, Kemptville, Ont., collected 75 children's Bibles for the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. They chose 10 different sorts of Bibles: the Pajama Bible for the youngest kids, the Picture Bible for teens and so on. A dedication service was held in June: Rev. Samer Kandalaft, Ruth Bond, Dave Carmichael, of St. Paul's Mission Committee, and Gerardo Quintanar, the Spiritual Advisor of CHEO.



Cake of the Month: Rev. J. Mark Lewis celebrated the 25th anniversary of his ordination in May at St. Andrew's, Kitchener, Ont. Pictured with him are his wife, Donna, and the Clerk of Session, Catherine Hertel.



Rev. Dr. P. A. (Sandy) McDonald has been minister at St. Andrew's, Dartmouth, N.S., and Musquodoboit Harbour, N.S., since August 1968, since he was ordained. The celebrations were held at St. Andrew's. Rev. Dr. Cameron Brett was the guest preacher. From left: Cheryl Weeks, Clerk of Session, Margaret Brett, Brett, McDonald, Christine McDonald, Norma Fallows, convener of the celebration committee.



On Easter Sunday, Parkwood, Ottawa held a reception to honour Mrs. Margaret Williams, on her 100th birthday. Designated a deaconess by the Presbytery of Cape Breton in 1935, Williams is an active member of Parkwood. She served as church librarian for many years, taught the Bethel Bible classes and sang in the choir. Until three years ago, she was an active elder. She is seen receiving a congratulatory certificate from Donna McIlveen of the Order of Diaconal Ministries, which is also celebrating an anniversary this year (see General Assembly coverage).





Rev. Cedric Pettigrew, interim minister at Gloucester, Ont., wrote *People and Places* to say it was “the Spirit of God moving in the lives of these folks leading them to unite with this congregation.” Gloucester is seeking a full time minister and growing at the same time—here are a dozen of the 15 new members. And, it seems that

Spirit also moved Pettigrew (far right): “There were some adherents and also some new people who have started to attend in the last year. All I did was write a personal letter to each suggesting that this might be a good time to unite with the Church as members.” Oh that Spirit!



Just a couple of men shaking hands? Not quite: this is the deceptive quality of *People & Places*. Barry Grant was one of two new elders—along with Jon Toebes, not pictured—ordained at Knox, Gamebridge, Ont., in March. He is shaking his father Don’s hand, who is also an elder at Knox. Barry’s grandfather Ewart MacInnis was clerk of session for 50 years. Rev. Grace witnesses this historic family legacy.

## Had cake lately?

See [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca) for instructions on How To Submit Photos in the Digital Age.

### On our website:

A unique baby shower at St. Timothy’s, Ajax, Ont. Helen Caughey, a stalwart soul, on Amherst Island. Kirkin’ ‘O The Tartan in Dunedin, Florida. Counting pennies and changing the world—loose changes miracles, at Knox, Goderich, Ont. and Knox-St. Andrew’s, Ont. Fifty years at Ingleside, Ont., celebrated by four ministers. Preschool and kindergarten kids at Knox, Iroquois, Ont., hold a food drive. 175 years at New St. James’, London, Ont., celebrated with cake and an anniversary anthem. Teens in Lucknow learn about Mayans thanks to PWS&D. Rev. Ralph Fluit of Melville, Scarborough, Ont., goes to Malawi to teach. An award winning band in Nanaimo, B.C., helps kids in Guatemala.





On May 25 Mary Fontaine, director of the aboriginal outreach Hummingbird Ministries, was ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The service took place in Mistawasis, Sask., at the First Nation Community Centre. Following her ordination, Rev. Fontaine proceeded to baptize her grandson and oversee a communion service at the Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church. "I'm proud of being Presbyterian and glad that I can be both a Christian and a Cree woman," she says.

## A new church grows in Winnipeg

Trinity is vital and growing. BY EMILY WIERENGA

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 40 YEARS, a Presbyterian church has been planted in the city of Winnipeg. Trinity was launched on Easter Sunday, 2007, with opening ceremonies attended by 90 people. At that point, the congregation met at a community centre. "Since then we've had anywhere from 40 to 60 in worship consistently," says Rev. Matthew Brough, a Winnipeg native and former pastor of Knox, Selkirk, Man.

In 2003, the Presbytery of Winnipeg decided there was a need for a Presbyterian church in the southwest. By the following spring, a New Church Development Committee had been formed and land purchased by Canada Ministries. In November 2006, Brough was called. "I had been involved with the committee for a few years, and it had been really exciting work."

Brough resigned from the committee and submitted his profile for the position. "Throughout the process, I felt the

Holy Spirit confirming this as a true call from God," says Brough, who is married to Cheryl, a teacher who currently directs the church's children's ministry.

Most members are under 40 years old, with the largest percentage between 18 and 30. "The greatest need I think we're fulfilling is people's need for community," says Brough. "There is a lot of isolation in the suburbs, and overwhelmingly when we ask people what they like about Trinity they use words like community, home and family."

Two groups were started to study what it means to follow Jesus; once they were complete, the groups continued meeting, becoming the church's first care groups. In May, a third care group was created for young adults.

"I believe we need to have a wider witness within Winnipeg," says Brough, "and I hope that Trinity will play a key role in the development of the next new church in our presbytery." ■



# Sharing the Stories

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission visits Assembly.

BY EMILY WIERENGA

"AS A NATION, perhaps we haven't even started nation-building because a lot of people in this country haven't been included in the process," said Robert Watts, special advisor to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools, in an address to the General Assembly on June 5. "There's a societal opportunity before all of us," he continued, to engage Aboriginal people in a way they haven't in the process of creating Canada.

The Commission was established on June 1 and is an effort resulting from the court-approved Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement that was negotiated between former students, churches, the Assembly of First Nations and other Aboriginal organizations. The Presbyterian Assembly was one of the first stops on a five-year journey of listening to both private and public stories of residential school survivors.

Claudette Dumont-Smith, a native health expert who was that week named one of three commissioners—along with Jane Morley and Justice Harry S. Laforme—told the Assembly, "We do know the church played a significant role in helping carry out work of residential schools, but what we don't know is the truth."

The Presbyterian Church was one of four denominations, along with Anglican and Roman Catholic, and after 1925

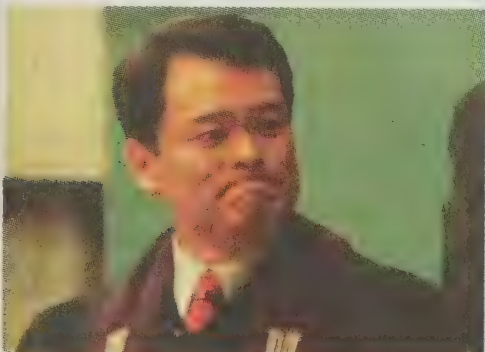
the United Church, that administered residential schools on behalf of the federal government. From the early 1900s to as late as 1996, more than 150,000 students were forced to attend one of 130 government-run schools where they were restricted from seeing their families, speaking their language or practicing their culture, and were also physically and sexually abused.

**"You can't just say 'I'm sorry' then turn around and forget about it; that's not reconciliation. The first step is to deliver the story, what we learned"**

"It's not fair to our nation's history to not include [these stories]," said Watts, a father of three and grandfather of four from Ontario's Six Nations Reserve. "When you consider the impact it's had on aboriginal people we have to ask 'Why hasn't it been part of our history?'"

On June 11 the Prime Minister Steven Harper offered an apology to the Aboriginal people for its role in the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools.

Moderator of the 134th General Assembly Rev. Cheol Soon Park said in an interview, "You can't just say 'I'm sorry' then turn around and forget about it; that's not reconciliation. The first step is to deliver the story, what we learned." ■



Left: Moderator Rev. Cheol Soon Park responds to testimony from an abuse survivor.



Right: Assembly Clerk Rev. Stephen Kendall makes a presentation to TRC commissioner Claudette Dumont-Smith.



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# Bach receives Legacy

REV. KAREN BACH, currently director of the Evergreen Centre for Street Youth at Toronto's Yonge Street Mission, was honored in May for her contribution to the ecumenical chaplaincy at the University of Toronto. Presented at Victoria College, the Legacy Award was created this year to celebrate leadership in the work of the university's ecumenical chaplaincy. The chaplaincy board said there "was no question" that Bach should be the award's inaugural recipient.

"I am reminded of the parable of the sower," said Bach, thanking those who have helped continue the work of the chaplaincy. "As a chaplain, you just throw your seeds out and hope some of it grows."

The chaplaincy began in 1990, after Bach, who was a student at the time, asked why there was no Presbyterian chaplain on campus. Before she knew it, the position was approved by the East Toronto Presbytery, and Bach was chosen to do the work. Three years later, the United Church asked Bach if she would consider serving as their chaplain too, creating a joint chaplaincy position. In 2001, it became the ecumenical chaplaincy, pointing to the interdenominational and inter-faith work the chaplain actually did—

and does—on campus. Bach remained the chaplain until 2002.

In speaking about Bach's contribution, Rev. Dr. Art Van Seters, a former principal of Knox College, listed three things a university chaplain needs: extraordinary sensitivity, a deep ground-

**"I am reminded of the parable of the sower. As a chaplain, you just throw your seeds out and hope some of it grows"**

ing in one's own spiritual tradition while being open to other traditions, and the ability to truly engage with people that fosters a deep wrestling with the spirit. "You manifest these three qualities," Van Seters said to Bach. "Personally, you challenged me, and were honest with me, and I know from that, that you must have helped many others in deep ways."

Susan Addario, former director of student affairs at the university, said Bach made the university "more equitable, attainable and inclusive," and that her presence "brought calm, understanding, and healing to the most difficult of situations."

While reminiscing about the joys of the job, Bach told the *Record*: "I loved the intense, intellectual conver-



sations with students; I loved it when the lights would go on for them ... I loved being able to pave a path for other faith leaders to have access to the university's facilities. Most of all I loved the relationships that I had with staff and with students—each one of them felt so sacred.

The U of T ecumenical chaplaincy has received an annual grant of \$5,000 from Canada Ministries since 2001. The department gives a total of \$41,400 to 13 university chaplaincies across Canada. ■ —A. Machlachlan

## Churches rally for China

A COALITION OF CHINESE language churches in the Greater Toronto Area met in the immediate aftermath of the worst earthquake to hit China since 1976 and issued a cheque for \$10,000 to a Christian relief fund.

On May 12 an earthquake measuring 8.0 on the Richter scale hit Sichuan province in southwestern China. Presbyterian Trinity Mandarin was

amongst the Chinese congregations that met.

Trinity's minister Rev. Wes Chang says, "our church will collect money till the end of May and send it to PWS&D," he says.

While only one of their congregation members is from Sichuan, "The whole congregation feels the pain of the loss there. It is horrific to see what

has happened in both China and Burma—tens of thousands of lives wiped out in such a short while."

Just a day after assessing the quake-hit villages of Penghua and Woyun, where most homes are collapsed or severely damaged, Amity Foundation—which is supported by PWS&D—staff returned with desperately needed cooking oil and 1,700 quilts. To read about PWS&D's work please go to [www.presbyterian.ca](http://www.presbyterian.ca).

■ —EW



# Four Churches, One Project

Kitchener congregations  
face the future together.

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

FOUR DOWNTOWN KITCHENER congregations, who had signed a covenant in 2001 to work together, met in May to discuss the issues they face. St. Andrew's Presbyterian, St. Peter's plus Zion and Trinity United Churches, held an architectural competition at the University of Waterloo in 2004 which resulted in a plan to raze several church wings, and build high-density housing while conserving sanctuaries. This year's conference sponsored by Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation sought to hear about other downtown church projects and consider future options.

A Lutheran member assessed the problems facing his church: too much real estate, declining attendance and membership, operating expenses are not being met, mission money is not there, staff are not being paid appropriately, and upkeep is not being done.

In contrast to the other congregations, Rev. J. Mark Lewis of St. Andrew's says, "I think that we're growing. And trying to expand all our missions and ministries. And we have money, because we have people. I think that we're in a growth and strengthening position." The congregation is aging but vibrant, youth ministry continues to grow. Attendance is leading some to think about returning to two morning services.

Jan Blackburn of St. Andrew's sees the Four Churches project as a mission in itself, a witness to the community of Christian unity, an avenue to attract people into the downtown and into the worshipping community. Perhaps a renewed day care will be located at St. Andrew's. They want to grow mission in the downtown, not to just preserve the congregation. But preservation is an issue as St. Andrew's building has a heritage designation that limits its uses and reshaping. The next meeting is this fall. ■

## HOPE

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# A terrible natural disaster

Two Canadian Karens visited Burma during the cyclone.

*SAW WINNING AND WAH LAY RAY are amongst about 100 Karens who live in Thunder Bay, Ont., because of sponsorship led by First Presbyterian. Karen are an ethnic people from Burma, who comprise about 15 per cent of the population there. Winning and Ray happened to be in neighbouring Thailand when the devastating Cyclone Nargis tore through Burma in early May killing an estimated 100,000 people and leaving tens of thousands of others without food or water.*

*Winning and Ray spoke with the Record's Emily Wierenga in mid-June after their return. This is an excerpted version of their testimony. The full version can be found on our website.*

**WLR:** When I first set down my feet on the land where I was born, I felt that I was home. But, I could still sense the fear and insecure environment. There was a joy when I realized that there were a group of my cousins waiting for us and coming to greet us on the riverbank. And I could not help myself when I saw the tears of joy in the eyes of my two aunties as we hugged each other. We only spent one night inside Burma; I had the chance to chat with all my relatives and some of my neighbouring Karen friends.

**SW:** While we were there, we saw on TV that a cyclone hit southern

Burma. It is really terrible what's happening with this natural disaster, but the worse thing is the military dictatorship; they don't allow the international community to help the people.

**WLR:** The Government of Burma rules the country with oppressiveness, selfishness and absolute authoritarianism. Obviously, I don't approve the way the government is handling things. When I heard about the tropical cyclone that hit Burma, I thought to myself, 'The people of Burma are already oppressed and their life is already miserable on account of the brutal government's lust for power, mismanagement and crimes against humanity. Now they have to face the consequences of terrible natural disaster?'

But I was really happy when we learned that the international organizations are willing and ready to help the cyclone victims. Once again though, we are very frustrated to witness the incapability, weak planning, slow response and unwillingness of the military junta to respond to the needs of its own people. I mean the military leaders surely know that the foreign aid will save lives and help to rebuild the devastated areas. If they opened up the disaster areas to international aid teams, I am sure they also fear that this might

## YSM Gives Literary Candy

YONGE ST. MISSION held its fourth annual book fair in May, giving away 25,000 books to children and other residents of Regent Park, a high needs designated neighbourhood in Toronto.

Over 1,300 people, including

some local public school classrooms, passed through and took home their own personal library of books.

Residents of eight downtown apartment towers managed by Brookfield Properties donated the books and vol-

unteers from Ernst & Young and Starbucks helped. One person described the events as, "kids in a candy store."

YSM is a downtown Toronto mission supported by the Presbyterian Church. ■



undermine their credibility and it might expose their total abuse of power.

SW: I still have relatives in Burma. My wife's family members are there. They aren't doing well because there's no food. People are starving all over the country ... not only where cyclone hit, but everywhere. The international community doesn't really know because Burma doesn't let people know.

WLR: Currently the living conditions inside Burma are very poor, unstable and deplorable. And again life in refugee camps is very restricted and quite parasitical.

SW: I got out in 1988 when the pro-democracy uprising in Burma, during the student uprising. My wife left in 1987. I met a good Canadian friend in Thailand, Lloyd Willard Jones. At that time he was working for the Canadian Baptist Refugee Service in Thailand. He gave me sponsorship papers and helped me to come to Thunder Bay. My wife, Naw Irene, and I have one child, a boy. I am happy here. My wife and I work at the Valhalla Inn. Our son is starting junior kindergarten in September. I have never enjoyed such freedom as I do here.

WLR: My wife Daisy and I were sponsored by Sleeping Giant Refugee



Rev. Paul Kang with Wah Lay Ray, Momoh Sankoh and Saw Winning from Thunder Bay, Ont., at a conference at Crieff Hills, Ont., in April.

Sponsoring Group and the First Presbyterian Church in Thunder Bay five years ago. Life in Canada including Thunder Bay is really good: great government, good education, adequate health care, solid services for the new immigrants and a variety of tasty food. The cost of living in Thunder Bay is not high; that's why 11 Karen families have already bought houses.

Plus friends from the church are very hospitable, welcoming and generous. They provide clothing, household needs, furniture and helped us to begin a new life. They've allowed us to use church facility and have our own Karen service after English service (which I pastor). They've also let us to do some gardening so we can happily plant our favourite vegetables behind the church. ■

*One Hundred Karens and about 50 Sierra Leoneans plus some Somalis and Ethiopians, all Christians and Muslim Sudanese, live in Thunder Bay, thanks to efforts by First Church working with Presbyterian World Service and Development.*

## BUILDING HOPE

### What are your work responsibilities?

Very few of us deal with the following crises as part of our daily work: addictions, **anger issues**, childhood abandonment, custodial problems, **depression**, domestic abuse, education and training, emotional crisis, **grief**, guilt, family relationships, health problems, **homelessness** and housing, hunger, insolvency, justice issues, **murder**, parenting, pregnancy, spousal relationships, **sexual abuse** and rape, social assistance, spiritual quests, **suicide**, and violence.



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## Don't Sanction Zimbabwe

**ENI**—Rev. Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, which supported comprehensive sanctions against apartheid South Africa, has issued a warning against imposing an economic embargo on Zimbabwe.

"Children and women are among the first to suffer if world governments choose to impose economic sanctions," Kobia said in July, after the United States introduced a draft resolution on Zimbabwe to the UN Security Council. The draft asks for an arms embargo, and a travel ban and assets freeze against President Robert Mugabe and 11 of his top aides.

Kobiasaid, "There are still varying opinions as to how to move forward after what can be described as a façade election."

On June 29 Mugabe was declared the victor in a presidential election in which he had become the sole candidate. Opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai had previously pulled out of the poll, citing escalating violence against his supporters.

## Make Green Not War

**ENI**—World religious leaders who met in Sapporo, Japan, in advance of the summit of the Group of Eight industrial nations, which included Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper, urged G8 countries to cut military spending to finance environmental protection measures.

"Massive defence expenditures, a global total of US\$1.34 trillion in 2007 ... both directly assaults the ecosystem and squanders monies that urgently need to be directed to sustainable development," the religious leaders said in their Call from Sapporo in early July.

The 100 delegates—of different faiths including Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Japan's Shintoism from more than 20 countries—said money saved through cuts in military budgets should be used for an Earth fund to protect the environment and combat poverty. They also called for the implementation of the UN Millennium Development Goals, which among other things, aim to halve global poverty by 2015.

## Speak Up, Christians!

**ENI**—Evangelical Lutheran Church Holy Land Bishop Munib Younan, of Jordan, said Christians need to have a stronger voice in Jerusalem in order to prevent tensions spreading there, and that Muslims and Christians should work together on ecology issues. "Europe is suffering because [Christians] do not know how to talk with Muslims. Africa is also having problems on how to talk to Muslims. Ecology is the way to speak to the Muslims because we share the environment." He was speaking at the June meeting of the main governing body of the 68-million-strong Lutheran World Federation.

The Lutheran council meeting, held about every 15 months, took place near the foot of Africa's highest mountain, and with the theme, Melting Snow on Mount Kilimanjaro: A Witness of a Suffering Creation. Much of the discussion focused on climate change.

## PC(USA) Assembly News

**ENI**—U.S. Jewish groups are praising actions taken at the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) that include a call for denominational members to become, "non-partisan advocates for peace" in the Middle East, and that state that the church should not become identified with any one party in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "We welcome the movement by Presbyterians

toward balance," nine Jewish groups said in a statement after the late June assembly.

Relations between US Jewish groups and the PC(USA) have been strained since 2004. Then, the denomination approved a resolution calling for, "phased selective divestment in multinational corporations operating in Israel" because of Israeli policies in the Palestinian territories.

Following criticism about the divestment issue, the US church said in 2006 that it should only invest in corporations doing business in Israel or the Palestinian territories that were pursuing "peaceful" policies.

Other news from this year's assembly:  
- Approval, by 380 votes to 325, of a proposed change in the denomination's constitution that would, in effect, permit the ordination of openly gay clergy.

Though the divisions within the PCUSA have not become as contentious as those of the US Episcopal (Anglican) Church, they have nonetheless been heated, and those opposed to the action said it would harm the church. "Don't send a shock wave through the church," said Rev. William Stepp, adding that the denomination, "needs a continuing strong witness to biblical standards for sexuality." Rev. Susan Fisher said U.S. Presbyterians had debated the ordination issue for three decades and it was time, "to give the church voice, and vote to change language."

-Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow, 39, as the denomination's moderator, and Rev. Gradye Parsons as the general assembly's stated clerk. Parsons succeeds Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, who has served 12 years. Kirkpatrick will continue to continue to serve for two years as president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

## Dutch turn to youth for advice

**ENI**—Young adults dubbed "ambassadors for ecumenism" are to scrutinise the work of the Council of Churches in the Netherlands for one year as of September. The council's chairperson, Henk van Hout, made the announcement in Utrecht at a symposium to mark the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the council, the main ecumenical body in the Netherlands. ■



# The Real Agenda

But first we have to get past the business. BY ANDREW FAIZ

On the last day in Ottawa at the 134th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church commissioners were told there was good news and bad news. Good news: all business was completed—recommendations, overtures, reports all done. Bad news: there was still an agenda and the assembly had to continue. Above the speaker's head on a large screen was the agenda that was proving to be the bad news and forcing the assembled to remain in court: presentations by the Young Adult Representatives and the student representatives from the three colleges.

I am certain that the speaker would be horrified to think his joke could be seen as anything other than its intent, to lighten the mood; but, this example is the classic definition of “systemic discrimination.” I don't mean to pick on the speaker, of course, but this moment perfectly illustrates for me a continuing struggle between those who control the business of the church and those who struggle to express their voice.

This was a very emotional assembly during which some voices long left silent were heard personally and powerfully. Tuesday evening two residential school survivors gave their testimony honestly and graciously. And the assembly moderator, Rev. Cheol Soon Park, tapped into the deep emotions in the court and expressed on our behalf, as a fellow Presbyterian, the horror and sorrow felt by everybody towards the condescending apartheid of the past.

In that moment age, culture, race, presbytery and all other shallow identities were erased and we were all one in the name of Christ, expressing our apology through our moderator to people victimized by our institution.

Most people in the room were aware an official apology had been expressed by the church many years ago. But, the moment was about listening—yes, again—and responding with pastoral care. And that listening was a steady theme through the week. Park, who just happens to be of Korean descent, was a reminder that our church has moved past its European roots. (Last year's moderator was of Dutch descent, one of a few in a long line of Scots, Irish and English; the two before were women, one a long serving lay member, in a tradition of men and clergy). The celebration of the centenary of diaconal ministry reminded us of those tireless women who worked faithfully in the

trenches while they were denied keys to the front door.

And while the majority of the commissioners were of European descent, the court represented almost every continent, and many of these “others” did participate in the debate. Also, in its course assembly approved the church's new race relations policy; which, though decades behind society, is a welcome addition to our process.

And so in a week of opening voices it was discouraging that our youth were mocked as bad news agenda. It was a recidivist moment delaying the future. And as always at these moments—examples of diaconal ministers and residential school survivors come to mind—it is the graciousness of the “other” that saves the day.

**I look forward to these speeches each year as I do the YARs; and this year's group of teens was particularly remarkable. Serious, witty, sincere, talented, born leaders—they asked the church for more voice**


After a week of looking back at our sins and our forgotten heroes it was good to look forward with those who carry hope. Two of the college students have come only recently to the Presbyterian Church—one listed our polity as a primary reason. All three spoke of their passion for the church; it was very moving.

I look forward to these speeches each year as I do to the YARs; and this year's group of teens was particularly remarkable. Serious, witty, sincere, talented, born leaders—they asked the church for more voice. One of them suggested each congregation have a YAR on session. I second that motion, moderator!

As somebody who was ordained elder in his early twenties, I know it's not an easy job. As a YAR on session I could have eased into the job. That is one smart way of getting through the business of church to its real agenda. We are an institution in the name of one who was anti-institutional. He spoke truth to power; not power to truth. Which, by the way, is another definition of systemic discrimination. ■

*Andrew Faiz is the managing editor of this publication. You can reach him at [mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca).*






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# 134<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

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A Call For Change



# Park calls for change

Suggests the church step down from the podium and move into the community.

BY EMILY WIERENGA



**R**ev. Dr. Cheol Soon Park, Moderator of this year's General Assembly, wants to see the church move to the forefront of society. "Church should have the vision and understanding of the future or of the next generation, and we as a Christian community should show the people what to prepare and how to prepare and how we should move into the next stage; so my main theme is change."

In addition to becoming an agent of change, Park hopes to see the church initiate healing and reconciliation amongst the nations of the world. He makes mention of the pain caused in part by the church's involvement with Indian residential schools; the devastating situation in the Middle East; the death of another Canadian soldier in Afghanistan, and the seemingly irresolvable conflict between North and South Korea.

"I'd like to call all the members of PCC to pray for and participate in promoting the understanding and the spirit of peace, a permanent peace in these regions. Those two things are my main focus this year."

And to make this happen, Park recommends minister and leaders of the church start by stepping down from their podiums and into the community. "We're just staying within the boundaries and saying, 'This is who we are, so if you're interested join us.' Instead we should go out and reach people," he says. "The majority of society feels very foreign and uncomfortable to the church culture. We're just pushing them further away from us."

"Pondering the possibility or reflecting on the implications of this move/change is a luxury that we cannot afford anymore," he tells the *Record*. "I'd like to call for some action, some move, some decisions from local churches ... if we prolong the process too long we will be in a situation that we won't be able to do anything and that will be too late." ■



# Power of the gospel

Hans Kouwenberg reflects on the past year.

BY EMILY WIERENGA



**“I continue to be concerned about adequate advocacy within the national offices for ongoing local congregational development, worship and evangelism, as well as for developing new national and regional strategies for new church development.”**

**R**ev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg expressed concern the Presbyterian Church may have more of an institutional stance rather than that of a movement. “Although our new national resource centre, the Vine Network Helpline and The Vine Leadership Links sound promising, I continue to be concerned about adequate advocacy within the national offices for ongoing local congregational development, worship and evangelism, as well as for developing new national and regional strategies for new church development,” Kouwenberg told commissioners in his closing speech as moderator of the 133rd General Assembly.

Kouwenberg went on to share his appreciation for local congregations’ desire to be “healthy” and said he was encouraged throughout his travels across Canada by the “creative faithfulness” of ministers and lay people.

The minister of Calvin, Abbotsford, B.C., visited Kenya and Malawi during his moderatorial year, where he was struck by “the passionate spirituality of African Christians in the midst of poverty.” In Korea, he saw “passionate spirituality in the midst of plenty;” and, in Scotland, he was duly impressed by the General Assembly’s “depth and breadth of deliberations and decision making.”

Kouwenberg also had a personal visit to the prime minister’s office. The highlight of the year, however, was the Aboriginal and Church Leaders’ Tour—an event he said was “the most painful yet moving experience in which I was privileged to represent our church.”

Remember the children, Kouwenberg urged commissioners. “It behoves every one of us to learn more about what happened during those dark days when our Aboriginal neighbours’ culture, language and spirit was taken away from them, and to pledge ourselves to walk in new ways of reconciliation with Aboriginal, Metis and Inuit people whenever we can.”

Overall, Kouwenberg said, his experience as moderator has made him more of an informed and interested global citizen and Christian. “I’m more than ever convinced of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the power of the gospel, and the difference that can be made by the compassion and care of God’s people.” ■



**T**he enthusiastic congregation gathered at Knox, Ottawa, for the opening of the General Assembly experienced a worship service that was memorable. The presence of several hundred ready-to-sing Presbyterians put the average karaoke bar to shame. The Knox organ and choir were properly "classical" in that wonderful building and brought sweet memories to those who are weary of the 7/11 songs of seven words sung 11 times.

Holy Communion included the Biblical drink of wine and also water (but, not grape juice). Somehow I could not get the wedding feast at Cana out of my head and wondered if on this particular occasion what had been water had turned into wine or perhaps wine had turned into water? This question kept me occupied during the Assembly. I suspect that both actions occurred as sometimes the Assembly was cautious and anxious sailing the waters of our time and at other times opened the wine of new challenges and opportunities.

The election of Rev. Cheol Soon Park as Moderator was, of course, unanimous. A busload of people from Toronto Korean Church had driven from Toronto to be present as a sign of their support. Later in the evening the Korean contingent made the long return trip home in order to arise early for worship and work. It was unfortunate that these folks, many wearing their traditional Korean dress, could not have been more visible, perhaps seated at the front of the church.

That we prayed and sang in French, our second national language, and sang a little in Spanish was appreciated but it also tended to highlight that there were no prayers or hymns in the first language of our Moderator and in what is now the second language of our denomination, Korean.

I could not help but wonder why the Assembly theme "To Seek Justice" was not evidenced at that teaching moment called "the offering." With suffering brothers and sisters in China and Burma and elsewhere around the world it would have been an appropriate sign of our commitment to justice if the offering was designated to help elsewhere rather than for Assembly expenses.

Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg, retiring moder-

# Water and wine

## General Assembly Impressions.

BY L. E. TED SIVERNS



ator, displayed both at the opening service and throughout the Assembly his ability and commitment as he spoke about the older "Presbyterian" brother (*presbuteros* translated as "elder") in Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son. Later in the week, on an unforgettable Tuesday evening, the focus was on First Nations' poignant stories and colourful dance. Kouwenberg spoke with eloquent passion of our call to justice and need for reconciliation with our First Nations sisters and brothers. Oh what a night!

Meanwhile back at the opening service and throughout the Assembly, guests were introduced, guests who pointed us beyond ourselves to the larger world of denomination and religion (this time Buddhist) that cannot be ignored and who ➤



## WATER AND WINE >>

**“Was it an Assembly of Wine or Water? There wasn’t much to be ashamed of nor were there words that could be called prophetic. Probably as usual, we achieved a compromise of watered-down wine; or, was it wine-flavoured water?”**

challenge us to be open to the ways in which God continues to love his world.

Park was a gentle Moderator of the General Assembly, speaking wisely, praying thoughtfully and being firm when occasions called for it. During his year as Moderator he will no doubt be a good ambassador for Christ and for the Presbyterian Church.

The justice theme was a constant at Assembly but other than Tuesday night’s focus on First Nations it tended to be a catch-word that lacked definition and content—more water than wine.

Of course there was humour both intended and unintended. One of the students from our colleges brought down the house when he solemnly declared that “we are a united church.”

The Friday sederunt also reflected the wine and water that is the Presbyterian Church in Canada. There was genuine enthusiasm on the part of the ruling elder who sought a method to place a motion that committed the denomination to yearly Assemblies though he would have been ruled out of order had his motion been proposed. The debate about yearly or biennial Assemblies will continue into the foreseeable future or so it seems.

Strange to many ears, the closing of the Assembly involved several commissioners giving advice to

the Young Adult Observers, the Assembly and the Moderator—all of which is a procedural no-no. The Loyal Address was quite unusual in that though it consisted of a song prepared for the occasion—a song that focussed on the Assembly itself rather than on our loyalty and commitment to the world in which we live.

Now that the 134th Assembly is over, the work begins on carrying out what we have agreed to do and preparing for next year’s Assembly in Hamilton, Ont. Was it an Assembly of Wine or Water? There wasn’t much to be ashamed of, nor were there words that could be called prophetic. Probably and as usual, we achieved a compromise of watered-down wine; or, was it wine-flavoured water?

On the Saturday prior to the opening of the General Assembly close to 100 elders gathered at St. Paul’s Church for a series of workshops sponsored by the Elders’ Institute of St. Andrew’s Hall. This was the sixth year of this program, a program that has helped raise St. Andrew’s profile and provided support for ruling elders. (Full Disclosure: I was involved in this event so you may count this as propaganda; though my words are true). An overture has asked that the Wednesday of Assembly be a day of teaching and this will be considered with a report to next year’s General Assembly. ■

*Dr. Siverns has retired once again, this time as acting Dean of St. Andrew’s Hall in Vancouver.*

## Assembly Reaffirms Uniqueness of Christ

REVISED INTERFAITH  
MANDATE CONCERNS  
COMMISSIONERS.

BY EMILY WIERENGA

**The** longest debate at this year’s assembly was an extension of issues raised last year by the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee. An overture asked assembly to reaffirm the uniqueness of Christ because the committee’s revised mandate “included words that left people confused in terms of our relationship with people of other faiths,” Rev. Shannon Bell-Wyminga, of B.C.’s Cariboo Ministry explained to

the Record.

“If it’s perceived that our church no longer adheres to the saving work of Christ, that’s as great a problem as if it were true.” She acknowledged that there were no inconsistent beliefs among the commissioners—just a variety of views, “but we need a foundation and this mandate should be that common ground.”

Rev. James T. Hurd of Ottawa agreed, “We must make a statement and affirmation to

Christ; it’s worth repeating.”

Rev. Bob Faris, Interfaith convener, assured the assembly that the committee conducts all its work within all the subordinate standards of the church. The committee argued the overture was redundant.

Dan MacKinnon, Presbytery of Ottawa, supported the overture, told the Record: “I don’t think anyone had any reservations about whether we should be engaged in inter-faith dialogue; the issue



# Our Uniqueness

This is not the time for us to be threatened or become defensive. BY IN KEE KIM



**A**t this General Assembly, I saw the struggle of the Presbyterian Church trying to cope with the changing world. I sensed that many recognized the church could not remain as it had been. How can we be faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ while meaningfully engaging in a dialogue with the changing world that surrounds us? That was the big question we were struggling with at this Assembly. The Christian community has been struggling with that question from the very beginning. There was a lengthy debate about the uniqueness of Christ. Behind this debate, I saw that it was not just about the uniqueness of Christ but our own identity. Who are we in the context of this fast changing world? What is our own uniqueness?

General Assembly is a process of our church through which we identify and redefine who we are. We believe that God speaks to us through that process and lets us know His will. Not everyone agrees with decisions we make and not everyone accepts them as God's will for this church but nevertheless we honour the decisions and the process that mould us to be the people of God. No one decision by itself will be perfect and absolute but we trust that in the course of this process, God will make His will clear. This is a very important spiritual process and I saw people participate in it as a spiritual discipline, not merely as a duty. We are constantly reforming ourselves through this process. The Assembly is not a place where I exert my opinions and coerce the court to approve what I want. It is a place where we need to open ourselves, listen to each other and learn from each other. We should humbly take the risk of changing our ideas as we see the revelation of God that is disclosed through this process. I saw the sincerity and openness of the commissioners who debated matters in an orderly manner. One of the Han-Ca Presbytery commissioners shared with me that he was impressed by the tolerance of the people even though they sometimes had very different opinions with each other.

I was personally deeply touched by the testimony of our aborig- ➤

for most of us was about being clear about what we believed as Christians. Comments made by some of this committee's members, past and present, seemed sufficiently veiled as to not inspire confidence."

The Ecumenical Relations Committee added "interfaith" to its name in 2004. In 2007, there was extended debate over the committee's proposal that Presbyterians be encouraged "to acknowledge, understand and appreciate other faith traditions." ■



**“God of the cross is our uniqueness. Our uniqueness is in our belief in God who embraced the people’s deep darkness of pain; God chose to be among them and even be vulnerable on the cross. Ultimately God brought healing, salvation and justice to the world”**

inal sister and brother. There was a deep sense of the spiritual reality of pain when Cree Elder Irene Lindsay and the Executive Director of the National Residential Schools Survivors’ Society, Ted Quewezance spoke so eloquently, sincerely and boldly, of their pain and weaknesses. They chose to be vulnerable. They showed tears in front of a whole crowd but I saw that they were not alone. Many people cried with them. When I looked around, I saw a man crying uncontrollably. When the Moderator gave them a heartfelt hug, my heart was filled with the deep compassion of God who embraced all of us there, especially the ones who shared the

pain. Their willingness to be vulnerable brought the Assembly together, deeply mourning our own weaknesses and darkness. At that moment, our differences did not matter. We all felt that we were together. We felt the solidarity that comes not with a decision of a court but from our hearts. There was no more segregation because of race, culture and not even religion. That is the power of the cross.

God of the cross is our uniqueness. Ultimately God brought healing, salvation and justice to the world using the very people who are weak, vulnerable, voiceless and defenseless, not the powerful ones. God on the cross was also weak, vulnerable, voiceless and defenseless. It is a very unique image of God. The Presbyterian Church is going through its own weak and vulnerable time. It is not the time for us to be threatened and become defensive. It is the time to reflect our own weaknesses and vulnerability and hear again Jesus’ unique teaching and build on new solidarity with all those who are suffering from pain in this world. It will not only keep us from the temptation of being a “power” religion but it will also renew our spirit to create a spiritual community which constantly redefines and reforms its unique identity. This is the best time to do that. It is not the time to try to revamp our church to be another popular religion or to go back to our glorious days but to rethink the essence of Jesus’ teaching and be true disciples. Suffering in this world and our own suffering will be a good teacher. Not only does it teach us the humility to embrace our own weaknesses but also the hope for justice in this world. When Jesus touched those who suffer, it not only healed them from pain but it also renewed them and made them the people of hope. That hope is the power of Christians. That is the uniqueness of our existence in this world, a uniqueness which cannot come by a court’s decision but by being in solidarity with those who suffer. ■

*Rev. In Kee Kim is minister of St. Timothy’s, Toronto.*



## A Heart to Heart Response

BY EMILY WIERENGA

**“If** you invite someone to be open and honest about wounds you’ve inflicted on them, either personally or through identification, then you also have the responsibility to ask for forgiveness from the individual or group you have wounded,” said Rev. Dan MacKinnon of Grace, Ottawa, following his request that the moderator apologize to General Assembly’s aboriginal guests.

It was Tuesday night, June 2—the day after Canada’s five-year Truth and Reconciliation Commission officially began, and the first full day of sederunts at Assembly. MacKinnon’s request for an apology was instigated by visits from Ted Quewezance, executive director of the National Residential School Survivors’ Society, and Aboriginal elder and residential school survivor Irene Lindsay, who runs her own grandmothers’ group in Ottawa.

In response to MacKinnon’s request Rev. Cheol Soon Park turned to Lindsay and said, “On behalf of all the people in this

room, I’d like to offer the most sincere apology. Thank you, and we ask for your prayers.” He then embraced her, and wept with her. The elder told the Assembly no one had ever done that before.

Park later admitted MacKinnon’s request had taken him by surprise, but his heart was “very open” to it. His Korean heritage resonated with the suffering of the Aboriginal people.

“For 36 years Korean people were under Japanese regime; we lost our culture, language, names and were forced to take Japanese names ... there was so much abuse done to Korean people,” shared Park. “Coming from this kind of background, as I hear the stories, the tragic mistake committed to aboriginal brothers and sisters, I felt the same pain, I felt the same agony—their prayers, and their cries.

“That made me respond to this situation and request from my heart. Not just as a formality, but as a heart-to-heart response.”



**W**hen the Order of Diaconal Ministries called upon their longest-serving member, 100-year-old Margaret Williams, to say a few words in honour of their centennial year, the diminutive lady took the microphone, said, "Thank you very much," then stood back and smiled.

Established in 1908 by action of the 34th General Assembly, Diaconal Ministries was founded to "take steps to set apart an order of women who shall be known as deaconesses; who shall serve the church as nurses, parish visitors, dispensers of charity and in any other way that may prove desirable," as well as "approve at the same time some method by which graduates may be specifically designated by the Church when entering their work."

Since its inception, Diaconal members have faithfully served the church as evangelists, nurses, teachers and missionaries in Canada and overseas. In the early 1900s when there were few social agencies, many deaconesses also served in health and social services.

During the 50s and 60s the focus was largely on Christian Education; they have also served as Hospital Visitors, Pastoral Assistants, Home and Overseas Missionaries, Administrators and Area Educational Consultants.

In 1984 the Order of Deaconesses was renamed the Order of Diaconal Ministries, opening the door for men to become members. Since then the Order has continued to serve the church while maintaining a strong relationship with other similar organizations—specifically, the Diakonia World Federation.

Donna McIlveen, administrator for Diaconal Ministries, told the *Record*: "We are hopeful that across the church, the Order will be celebrated. In many presbyteries there are members—some retired, some active—who have by their service impacted the lives of others. We are encouraging congregations and presbyteries to share in the celebration—to seek out a member of the Order and listen to their story—to offer thanks for the first 100 years and to help the Order move with continued purpose into the next 100 years."

# Women Who Serve

**Celebrating a century of  
Diaconal Ministries.**

BY EMILY WIERENGA



She expressed gratitude on behalf of the organization for the commissioners at the 134th General Assembly "who so generously gave to our anniversary offering project of upgrading the Flora House Computer Lab. Our original goal was \$1,500. The generosity displayed was inspiring. What a joyous way to begin our celebration!" ■

**// We are encouraging congregations and presbyteries to share in the celebration—to seek out a member of the Order and listen to their story //**



## Ensuring Women's Wisdom

MERCY ODUYOYE, E.  
H. JOHNSON AWARD  
RECIPIENT.

BY EMILY WIERENGA

**“We** are trying to help women see where the good news lies. We are taking the veil off issues they normally don't talk about,” said Dr. Mercy Oduyoye, founder of The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, in her address to commissioners at the E.H. Johnson Award Luncheon on June 3.

A Ghanaian Methodist married to a Nigerian Anglican, Oduyoye is a passionate feminist Christian. “I came from a maternal culture and married into a paternal one,” she said. “There's such cultural variety in Africa. My goal is to come to terms with human nature being one: male and female are different only for the purpose of procreation. Beyond that we share all the same rules.”

The Circle began in 1989 with a gathering of African women theologians. Later, several national chapters were initiated and the Circle began to spread. Typically, says Oduyoye, the Circle engages in issues embedded in culture or religion. It's through such dialogue, Oduyoye believes, that women will be empowered and liberated in a largely misogynistic culture.

Oduyoye has travelled the globe, been published in the area of Missiology and women-centred theology, and has been awarded five honorary doctorates in Theology and Ecumenical Leadership—the latest of which was given by Yale in May. “For as long as women remain a majority that is discriminated against, and religion remains a key factor in human life, women in theology will find themselves having to ensure that wisdom is not perceived as being in the nature of men only,” Oduyoye told commissioners.

Oduyoye studied theology at the University of Ghana, Legon, and at Cambridge in the United Kingdom, taught high school in both Ghana and Nigeria, and was on the faculty of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

# Sailing with the spirit

Vanuatu visitors return mission message to Assembly.

BY EMILY WIERENGA



**“We** are standing here because of the gospel which met us 160 years ago,” said Vanuatu-native Rev. George Aki to commissioners at this year's General Assembly.

As Moderator of the General Assembly of Vanuatu, Aki made the trip to Canada along with Rev. Kalsakau Urtalo in order to celebrate 160 years of being in rela-

tionship with The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Aki expressed gratefulness for the “faith of the missionaries of your Church who came to share and witness to our people.” He made specific reference to Presbyterian minister John Geddie, who left Canada in 1846 to share the gospel message with the people of Vanuatu. Aki recalled Geddie's words upon leaving Canada: “I go forth with a resolve in the strength of grace to devote my soul, my body, my all to my Redeemer's service and glory.”

Urtalo, Assembly Clerk of the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu offered a handmade sailboat to the Canadian Moderator. “We have a gift and this gift is in the church,” he said. “The boat cannot sail without the power of the wind; we believe it's the wind of the Holy Spirit of God that took you to sail from your country across the ocean to where our island is. We want to give this boat to you as a reminder of the Spirit which brought us back to you.”

Moderator Cheol Soon Park took the boat, embraced the men, then turned to the commissioners and said, “It took these men 22 hours to get to Toronto and then five hours of driving to get here; it took our missionaries two years to get to Vanuatu 160 years ago.

“We are reminded by this wonderful gift what the Great Commission is about. Go forth and commit yourself to this purpose.” ■





## A message from the frontlines.

BY CHASE JOHNSON



**T**he theme of the week, To Seek Justice, spoke to me about the truth of residential schools and how this generation can make a difference by learning from the mistakes of the past. I agree with what my friend and fellow Young Adult Representative Paul Dick said during his speech at our presentation “We want to see a Canada where Aboriginal people can thrive and feel proud to express their culture, traditions, and spirituality. As the future leaders of Canada it is our responsibility to begin by starting a new chapter”

On Wednesday night the YARs were given a challenge. YAR Anne Maclean paints the picture: “We were dropped off in the Byward market with \$5 each, and were told we had a half hour to buy food for a picnic supper. This involved working together, pooling our money

and organizing who bought what. This proved to be quite tricky—there are many strong leaders in our group with different opinions. We figured out quickly that we could not please everyone. However, we all came back with something, and although it was a pretty random supper, everyone had enough.”

The generational gap is quite prevalent in our church. It’s the Sunday schools, youth groups, young adult groups and summer camps that are the frontlines of this Church as far as evangelism and spiritual growth are concerned. Do whatever you can to give them the education, spiritual support and the tools necessary to work for the cause of Christ in today’s Church. ■

*Chase Johnson is a youth director at First, New Westminster, B.C. The full version of YAR and student speeches are online.*

## Strong Feelings—Great!

In Matthew 5, Jesus says “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled ... Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” When we seek justice, we have Christ’s promise that we will find it in Him, that the brokenness in our relationships with God, our planet and each other will be healed and we will be reconciled through the grace of Jesus Christ.

*Curtis Babitz—Student Representative, St. Andrew’s Hall/Vancouver School of Theology*

During the week indeed we could witness some tensions, some polarizations and also some fears coming out of each group. Fears that some overtures or recommendations would jeopardize the identity and perhaps orthodoxy of our denomination. During those moments this resurrection narrative came to my mind: Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” John 9

*Richard Bonetto—Student Representative, Presbyterian College, Montreal*

We heard from many this week—many strong feelings, representing strong opinions within our various churches. I say “great!” It’s as it should be. No real community agrees all the time—no family is always completely uniform in their understanding. In fact, its diversity that makes us stronger.

*Jeremy Bellsmith—Student Representative, Knox College, Toronto*

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# Some more GA NEWS

On-going tweaks to make a richer church.

BY EMILY WIERENGA



Mercy Oduyoye

**“For as long as women remain a majority that is discriminated against and religion remains a key factor in human life ... women’s wisdom has to be a part of what moves our community —both in church and in society”**

**I**nternational Affairs Committee made a recommendation endorsing visits to the Holy Land sponsored by the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem. It failed to pass after commissioners suggested evidence had been found for Sabeel being anti-Semitic; it was also recommended that the court be offered more than one tour group through which to visit the Holy Land.

- **The Women’s Missionary Society** submitted that both numbers and funds are decreasing dramatically. “We have no doubt that God does have a plan,” said convener, Druse Bryan. In 2009 the WMS will be forced to decrease contributions to regional staff from \$396,000 to \$200,000. The Moderator commended Bryan for stepping up in such a difficult time, and assured the WMS of prayers.

- **The Pension and Benefits Board** recommended that congregations and other employers paying premiums for active members of the Health and Dental Plan should be exempted from paying premiums for the first quarter of 2008. In addition, given the financial status of the Pension Plan an adequate surplus is not available to enable the board to grant a cost of living increase for 2009.

- **While some presbyteries suffer** from a short supply of interim moderators, that position cannot be filled by ruling elders. The Clerks, in consultation with the Committee on Church Doctrine, suggested that serving as an interim moderator is different from serving as moderator and requires a minister of Word and Sacraments. An overture requesting the Assembly to permit elders not serving on session to be equalizing elders was also defeated, with the clerks noting that elders must be “on the constituent role of one court in order to serve on the constituent role of another.”

- **The Clerks also recommended against** establishing a special committee of past moderators, saying they are concerned this would “amount to an additional body within the governance of our church that would run counter to the fundamental roots of our polity.”



• **Minor changes in by-laws** and staffing at Knox College were adopted. "We basically did a clean up of 1998 bylaws—they were too detailed; we wanted room to move," said Dr. Dorcas Gordon, principal of Knox College.

• **Rev. Dale Woods** was appointed as Director of Pastoral Studies at The Presbyterian College, Montreal, for a three-year term effective July 1, 2008.

• **Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald** was granted tenure and promoted to full professor of Church and Society at Knox College.

• **Changes to the Church's** camping and outdoor ministries were initiated by the Life and Mission Agency. All camps and outdoor ministries will abide by the Leading with Care policy; LMA will help make financial resources available to camps, including a meeting with a financial strategist, in hopes of establishing long-term endowment funds and a clear financial strategy for camping ministries; a means of assistance will be explored for camps not yet fully accredited due to financial stress as long as these camps move toward full provincial accreditation by 2010; and LMA will provide governance training for camps and supervising bodies. And, it was decided national funds will be allotted for the operation of camps owned and operated by the PCC.

• **Rick Fee**, who recently battled a very rare virus, was remembered by LMA convener Rev. Daniel Cho. "God has answered our prayer. He is recovered."

• **Congregations were encouraged** to explore energy conservation measures for their buildings, and where possible, conduct energy audits. Congregations were reminded that the church's Lending Fund may provide up to \$60,000 in loans for such endeavours.

• **A response to an overture** requesting biennial assemblies was deferred until 2009, as was a report on the translation of *Living Faith* and the Book of Forms into Korean. Any further work and discussion on a stole for the Moderator of the General Assembly will cease.

• **The Committee on History** has been authorized to create the National Presbyterian Museum Committee comprised of nine members who will run the museum, coordinate finances, nominate a curator, and advise and support the curator. The change comes after Rev. Dr. John Johnston, the museum's

founder and curator, passed away in January. A minute of appreciation was recorded in his honour.

• **Canada Ministries** is planning a new program which will give greater assistance in planting new congregations by providing, at the request of the presbytery, a fund to allow the use of a consultant; along with a 'coaching' program for each New Church Development worker, a mentoring program, annual New Church conferences, bursaries and continuing education events. Canada Ministries believes there is a need to become more intentional about planting churches throughout Canada.

• **Rev. Dr. Jim Czegledi**, former associate secretary for Worship and Evangelism Minutes and Mr. Keith Knight, associate secretary for Resource Production and Communication were both remembered by Assembly.

• **Assembly Council** presented two policies for approval: The Policy of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for Dealing with Allegations of Racial Harassment—Growing in Christ: Seeing the Image of God in our Neighbour, and A Statement of Commitment Toward Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Leadership at the National Level of The Presbyterian Church in Canada which dealt the issues of hiring national staff and appointment of volunteers to national committees.

This triggered an emotional response: One commissioner said the KKK couldn't have written a more racist policy. "You're proposing to hire people based on race; this is not justice," he said.

Incredulous at this sort of response, and in tears, Sheldon Lawrence, an elder from West Toronto whose roots trace to African descent said, "We should all be looking past our own skin. Has it really come to this?"

"I don't see it as promoting people because of their race," responded another commissioner from Toronto. "I see it as saying, 'Don't leave out others because of their race or background.'"

Another concurred, "This is a small denomination and I have been on nominating committees within presbyteries where people are scratching their heads wondering who they can wrangle into their jobs, and we don't think to ask those who haven't spoken up, who haven't been part of the same crowd ... We could be richer as a church if we did."

Both policies were accepted. "There's such a thing as structural discrimination; it's not intentional," said Assembly Council convener Lisbeth Duncan. "This is a statement reminding us all this is a vision we hope to see become reality." ■



# Seeking Gospel Engagement

The challenge is not reaching the numbers but remaining true to Christ.

BY ARTHUR VAN SETERS

When someone admits to a conversion experience in a CBC interview, my ears suddenly listen a bit more attentively. When that person is the vice-president for government policy with the National Association of Evangelicals in the United States, admitting to a major shift in his thinking about the environment, I become really curious! Richard Cizik did precisely that in late March after witnessing first-hand the extensive environmental degradation in Alaska. He said he could no longer bracket environmental issues, as so many evangelical Christians had tended to do. He had to make a connection between his deepest spiritual convictions and the world around him. His understanding of God as Creator and the creation as God's gift compelled a new perspective—and also gospel engagement.

Poignant experiences can forge a new connection between our understanding of the gospel and the world around us. In 1981, when I returned to my teaching duties at McGill University after a sabbatical in Central America, I was told that students felt I had experienced a conversion. My response was, "You are absolutely right!" In the face of acute marginality, I saw the gospel as inextricably connected to issues of poverty. There is no Good News if it is

not good news for the poor. My theological reflections on the structural causes of poverty somehow had to be linked to the blunt reality of what I had witnessed. The gospel now challenged my middle-class perspective in a more direct way.

It is interesting to view our response to our experience of the world in light of Paul's key statement at the begin-

**Unless we are clear about what we believe, we won't really have the depth of commitment necessary to be a lively, engaged, and faithful believing community**

ning of Romans 12, where he urges church members to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. Actually, the Greek word used for 'renewing' is the word from which we get 'metamorphosis.' Think of the radical change from a caterpillar to a butterfly and one has a sense of a marvellous newness that is possible through the influence of really being grasped by the message of Christ.

Notice, however, that in Paul's letter the root motivation for changed ethical behaviour is not human experience but theology. Paul has just completed an elaborate exposition of how God has acted in Jesus Christ for the redemption of a broken and sinful world. Out of this theological understanding, he encour-

ages the church to be a community of people who witness to the gospel in the midst of the world.

Both theology and experience are needed to discern how we are called to be the church today. This is a challenging process, because a secular world does not take God seriously. Even when religious language is used, the overall perspective leaves God practi-

cally unimportant—often just a way of simply emphasizing something.

In addition, the church is no longer at the centre but on the periphery of much public discourse. Where religion is allowed into the conversation, it has tended to be relativized as though all viewpoints are equally valid. By appealing to tolerance and inclusivity, most of what we hold to be distinctive is reduced to very little. At that point many, especially young people, say, "Why bother?"

It is not surprising that some are discouraged about the future of the church. Declining membership (with an increasing number of people preferring just to be adherents rather than members), challenging finances, and ➤







the struggle to maintain buildings that seem too large and too old are among some of the issues frequently raised. But the numbers game is the world's game. Unless a business is growing numerically it is failing. But the church was never intended to be a mere reflection of culture.

For me, the central question is not how will a denomination with a declining membership survive, but how do we remain true to our rootedness in Christ and seek to live this out faithfully together in the world. This involves several deliberate moves.

First, we have to take an honest look at our understanding of the church as more than just another human organization. What kind of community are we? The New Testament calls the church "the Body of Christ." Around the Lord's Table we receive the presence of Christ himself and become a community bound both to Christ and to one another for the sake of the world. The followers of Jesus were sent out to continue the awesome movement begun in the ministry of Jesus with its fundamental significance for the world as a whole. We should stop acting as though the church's destiny is all up to us. We need to re-think our tendency to find the latest technique to increase our control over our future. The life and future of the church ultimately belong to Christ.

In each generation our church needs to recover our own spiritual heritage within the scriptures and the reformed tradition of the 16th century. How do we read an ancient text like the Bible? How does this complex and fascinating library illuminate the journey of the people of God and witness to Christ? How does scripture continue to speak to us and to our world today?

The reformers sought to recover a biblical understanding of the church and its faith. They articulated their convictions carefully for their particular time and place. How do we live out of their theological heritage? Our most recent doctrinal summary, *Living Faith*, as a liturgical expression of what we believe, is a very helpful statement. But like all such creedal pieces, it needs



continuing exploration and further concrete elaboration.

Unless we are clear about what we believe, we won't really have the depth of commitment necessary to be a lively, engaged, and faithful believing community. This hard theological work has to be woven into the very fabric of the life of the church, in all of its parts, including its colleges, assemblies, national boards and committees, presbyteries, and, yes, also congregations. Scholars and theologians of the church are important but so are pastors, elders, and regular church members. Without deeply spiritual communal engagement with our foundational convictions, our discernment will be shallow and tepid—and this includes a recovery of doxology that is the essence of worship, especially when we celebrate the sacraments that move us beyond words into the mystery of God's awesome grace.

Second, greater clarity about what we believe urges exploration of how we live in the world. The church is always being enticed to fit into the world and as individuals we are continually being shaped by our culture, often subliminally. It is incumbent on the church, therefore, to explore the world's ways of thinking and behaving through the lens of the gospel. For example, we believe in the inherent value of human beings as persons. When a society elevates the sphere of economic relations above all others, everything is commodified. If our federal government adopts an immigra-

tion policy that promotes the commercial value of would-be immigrants over, say, family unification, is this not starting to commodify human persons contrary to our Christian values?

But first, congregations need to reflect on how they themselves may be reflecting secular culture without realizing what they are doing financially. Their members may think that when they participate in a marriage or a funeral they need to pay for these "services." After all, the whole notion of service in our society has been commercialized. We expect to pay extra for services. In the fellowship of the church, however, such special occasions ought to be seen as integral to the church's collective life. Has our stewardship been replaced by money-raising schemes?

Finally, we are called not only to look at how culture has shaped our life, but also how the church's understanding of the gospel can imagine an alternative world. If we think of Paul's description of the incarnation in Philippians 2, we see a distinctive way of looking at power. The divine Son emptied himself of all divine prerogatives and took the path of suffering—and finally death on a cross—in order to pour out the awesome love of God for the world. The church is urged to have what he calls the "mind of Christ, and to manifest it in bold and compassionate service." So how do we look at the world's exercise of power and particularly its preference for using military force? In a world of conflict and violence, alternatives to such force have often been much more effective.

Rethinking power relationships can be linked to the exercise of justice. Yale professor Miroslav Volf is a theologian who looks at the radical forgiveness revealed in the cross. He outlines the difficult journey of repentance and forgiveness that can create a far deeper kind of community than one based on a law-and-order approach. In a post-9/11 world, it seems far greater emphasis is placed on secret trials, even tolerance of torture, and certainly punitive justice. But Christian leaders like Rev. Desmond Tutu have enabled truth and reconciliation commissions in various countries

that have opted for the healing power of restorative justice. Our own church is currently participating in a journey of healing and reconciliation with Canadian First Nations.

As I think about our church at this particular time, I believe we need discernment that leads to engagement with the world for which Christ died. In my previous two pieces, I have suggested that it is helpful to listen to voices like those of Stanford Reid and Douglas Hall, who prod us to recover something of our heritage as the lens for discerning our own times. Many other names like John Calvin and Walter Bryden could be added. Now I am also suggesting that we need to be open to being converted individually and collectively to live the gospel more faithfully. Let me push this further by saying that it would help us as a denomination if we could learn to hold our own passionate views in real dialogue with alternative possibilities. We have the capacity, says Gregory Jones in a recent *Christian Century* article, "to hold conflicting ideas in constructive tension" and move toward integrative thinking. This is highly preferable to our culture's way of defining ourselves over against others.

The discernment I have been probing needs serious conversations in and among congregations where constructive tension framed by prayerful openness encourages both the recovery of our deepest spiritual heritage and its engagement with our experience of the world. Presbyteries can play a key role in fostering this through their own reorganization as deliberative gatherings rather than primarily business-processing courts. Other agencies of the church can then redefine themselves to give wisdom, support, and encouragement. The result could be a creative movement of the Spirit in which we become both more distinctive in the world and creative in fostering its redemption and shalom. ■

*Rev. Dr. Arthur Van Seters is principal emeritus of Knox College, Toronto. This is the last of three articles on discernment. Responses to this article can be sent to [letters@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:letters@presbyterianrecord.ca).*

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# Privilege of Parenthood

Peasant TV knows nothing of pure joy.

BY PHIL CALLAWAY

I have the flu. Symptoms include everything from voice loss to a lack of enough physical stamina to hold up a paperback. Painfully, I muster up enough energy to reach for the remote control.

On one of the three channels we receive with Peasant TV, the host has just finished his opening tirade and now a kind-faced lady in a blue dress turns toward the camera. "The happiest day in my life," she says, smiling, "will be the day my daughter leaves home. I regretted my decision to have her from day one—you know, the day she was born." Some in the audience heckle. Others applaud. The host excitedly clutches his microphone and runs to the next aisle. His pockets jingle. The phones light up.

I've finally found a few people who are even sicker than me. By the time the credits roll, others are beginning to share her sentiments. "Kids are a pain," says one. "They're—like—so—much—like—total—trouble, you know?"

I suppose I'd be lying if I didn't admit that parenting has its drawbacks. Three kids eat up to 50 per cent of a household's income, the statistics tell us. And that's just on Wednesday! However you look at it, children aren't the best financial move you'll ever make. Without children I wouldn't be stepping on Lego land mines after midnight. Or frantically searching for one shoe, a hammer, or the remote control. And just think of the vacations we've missed. The peace. The quiet. The evenings out. The weekends

together—alone.

As I rest on my self-pity, the sound of little feet comes echoing down the hall. A little boy presses through the door followed by his little sister. He holds my dinner at an 18-degree angle. "Here's your first course, Daddy." Toast and butter never tasted better. A

**Life with small children is full of moments that make us realize that we are part of a far bigger picture than our own little world**

few minutes later he brings me my "final course," sneezes on it, then takes his little sister by the hand and quietly leaves the room. The whole thing is obviously choreographed by their mother.

Life with small children is full of moments like that. Moments that make us realize that we are part of a far bigger picture than our own little world. And although I may not be able to tell Sally Jessy Raphael or Larry King about the moments that have changed my life forever, none seems more important right now than the memory of a hot May day in 1986 when I first gazed into the eyes of my son. I had seen other babies. They were wrinkled and purple. But this baby was, well, wrinkled and purple, like the others ... but truly beautiful. This was my son. Stephen.

We had prayed for this boy. And God answered with the first of three gifts which grow more precious each day. What could be more exciting than watching him grow? Teaching him to

ice skate? Showing him how to catch a ball? Or watching him smack a line drive just over your head? How do you put a price tag on the joy I felt the day he suddenly stopped in the midst of a wrestling match, wrapped his arms around my neck and whispered, "Love you, Daddy."

"Lord, thank you for the privilege of parenthood," I pray. "For these three gifts you have entrusted us with. I give them to You again. Soon these halls will echo only with the memory of their laughter. Help us to make the most of each moment and point them to You each day."

By the way, the flu is gone now. It seems that I passed it on to my wife, and I just sent her dinner—in the hands of a three-year-old. ■

*Phil Callaway is the author of 15 books and a popular speaker. Visit him at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com).*





# Church as Surprise

Mission is the Church crossing frontiers in the form of a servant.

BY CHARLES FENSHAM

Last month, we explored the checkered history of the term “mission” and we sympathized with Bishop Stephen Neill who complained that if everything is mission then nothing is mission. This month, we will look at some helpful definitions of mission. All these definitions must be understood in the context of the idea of the Mission of God (*Missio De*).

Mission is, in the first place, God’s gracious movement to us as we see in Jesus Christ and the bringing of God’s reign of peace, justice and love. However, we may even think of God’s loving movement to us much further back to the act of creation. The realization that God, perfect in God-self, moved beyond God to

create the universe and us as God’s creatures, is perhaps the first and primal moment of mission. The commissioning of humankind at the beginning of the creation story sends us into God’s creation to tend and care for it. Mission begins with God’s creative act. Mission is about the goodness of creation and our place in it. Yet, as we are reminded in *Living Faith*, sin is a power present in this creation. The world is permeated with injustice, war, broken relationships, and the destruction of the environment. Thus, people and the whole creation need redemption. It is in this second redemptive move of God for the healing of creation and the bringing of peace and justice that our contemporary definitions of

mission are rooted.

In fact, the key role we play in the destruction of God’s gift of creation is recognized in the first definition I would like to cite. In 1960, the Dutch theologian J.H. Bavinck described mission as “... the penance of the church, which is ashamed before God and man (*sic*).” What is helpful in Bavinck’s perspective is the humility and penitence with which we join God’s redemptive mission for the world. *Living Faith* echoes this when it takes an old Hindu proverb to describe our witness to people of other faiths as “beggars telling other beggars where to find food.”

Building on this, the great missiologist (a theologian of mission) of the last century, David Bosch, ►





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## MISSION PART 2

defined mission as "... the penance of the church, which is ashamed before God and man (sic). Mission is the Church-crossing-frontiers-in-the-form-of-a-servant."

### Theological missiology is the science about the Word of God as the Church in her becoming

It is clear from these two definitions that mission is not about putting others right, it is not about triumphing over others, but rather about the dynamic "sentness" of the church in its movement with God's healing peace and justice across the world. Bosch pointed out that this frontier-crossing mission of the church crosses the frontier between faith and unbelief, but also includes addressing poverty and injustice and suffering in the world. In the words of Jesus in John 20:21, "Peace

be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you."

It is interesting that both Bavinck and Bosch include the church as an essential element of our mission. It is the disciples—the community of faith—who are sent together. We are sent, like Christ, first to be and then to minister, and we are sent as the Church. There is therefore no real mission without the church being authentic in its life and witness to our faith. Sometimes, in the twentieth century, there was much despair about the great discrepancy between the unfaithfulness of the church in its life and witness and the call to mission. Perhaps that is why mission is always something we do in a spirit of repentance.

However, mission is also dynamic and is exactly where the new and different frontiers confront us as the church. This is why I would like to end with another definition of mission by one of the most creative and authentic Christian witnesses of the twentieth century, Ivan Illich:

"Theological missiology is the science about the Word of God as the Church in her becoming; the Word as the Church in her borderline situations; the Church as a surprise and puzzle ... Missiology studies the growth of the Church into new peoples; the birth of the Church beyond its social boundaries; beyond the linguistic barriers within which she feels at home; beyond the poetical images she taught her children.... Missiology therefore is the study of the church as surprise ..."

This birth of the church beyond social boundaries, barriers and even pet theologies brings us to the topic for next month's discussion—the relationship between mission and evangelism. ■

*Rev. Dr. Charles Fensham is associate professor of systemic theology at Knox College, Toronto. His latest book is Emerging From The Dark Age Ahead.*



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# The Burning Bush

No one who really sees  
God is ever the same.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE



August 31, 2008:

Exodus 3:1-15

Matthew 16:21-28

A young Palestinian man ran away from the crowded reservations where his people live. He crossed desert wastes and climbed hills. He was drawn to the rocky crags of one of the peaks called God's mountain. Shading his eyes, he saw a thorn bush come alive with flame.

He took off his shoes. He knelt on the ground. He hid his face in his hands. Surely God was there. But whose God, and for what purpose?

He went back home. His grandfather told him a story about a shepherd who had seen a burning bush. It was a Jewish story, a Muslim story, and a

Christian story.

Word spread quickly. An archaeologist sought the young man among the refugee camps. Together they went to God's mountain. The bush caught fire and burned. The flames didn't consume the bush.

One man saw God. The other saw a discovery that would make his career.

More witnesses came. No one could get close enough to take a sample of the bush. It wouldn't burn when scientific instruments were aimed at it. It was for human eyes only.

Politicians and religious leaders began to fight over it. Who did it belong to? To which religion? Such a wonderful phenomenon must be preserved for all the world to see. But the world wouldn't want to scramble up a rocky

hillside to see it.

They negotiated a compromise, bearing in mind the delicate political situation of the region. The British Museum was proposed. It cost millions of pounds to create the proper setting for this botanical, chemical,

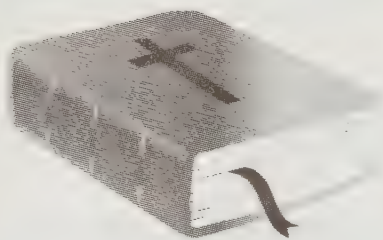
**One man saw God. The other saw a discovery that would make his career**

physical and religious spectacle. Hundreds of thousands of people came to see the burning bush when it arrived in London.

Outside the museum, two Muslims, one Jew, and three Christians crossed paths with their protest signs. Shouting that the crowd was miss- ➤



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## PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

ing the point. The wonder wasn't the burning bush, it was the God who used it to call people to attention.

The last person to see the burning bush was a security guard. He watched in horror, as the flames consumed the dry branches. Soon there was just a charred skeleton behind the glass. He said it felt like someone had died.

The curators of the museum decided fire had smouldered within the bush, springing to life when the atmosphere around it was disturbed. The bush bore berries that secreted a fire-retardant juice. The protective goo had finally burned away.

What happened to the young man who first saw the burning bush? It took him a long time to realize that the bush didn't matter. What mattered was what he experienced when he saw it. The voice that sang inside his head as he bent low in the bush's unearthly light.

He saw and heard the God he had long tried to forget. God pried open his eyes and ears and heart. Lifted him up to see over the borders he had crossed. He saw nations of God's

children oppressed by injustice and perverted religion. He saw oppressed and oppressors both in need of deliverance.

He saw people taking up arms. Surrendering to one evil in the name of fighting another. He saw others

**What happened to the young man who first saw the burning bush? It took him a long time to realize that the bush didn't matter**

suffering in silence. A refugee all his life, he felt the pain of all the homeless people in the world.

In response to it all he heard the resounding NO! of the God of the burning bush. His grandfather told him no one who really saw and heard God was ever the same. The only life for such a person was to do God's will.

Such a person might know failure along the way, but would never lose sight of victory in the end. So it was with Moses and all the prophets. So it must be with this young man. And so it was.

How is it with us, when we gather at the sign of the burning bush? When Jesus says, "Take up your cross?" ■

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe lives in Halifax and is a biblical storyteller who loves to tell the text as is, and in modern parallel stories.*

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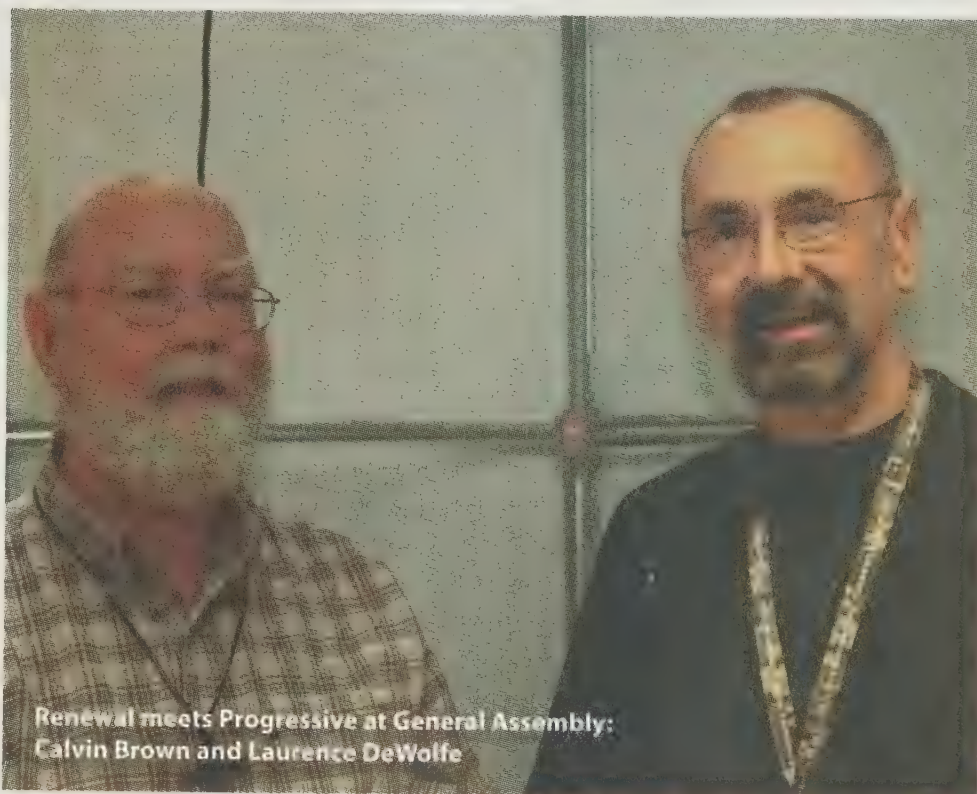
# Strange Procedures

And other delights from General Assembly.

BY CALVIN BROWN

**T**he rest of the magazine will no doubt give greater detail of the Assembly in Ottawa, so I have picked just a few highlights to share with you.

The first was the opening worship and the election of the new moderator, Rev. Cheol Soon Park. As usual the full church and raised voices set the glorious mood for hearing the word of the Lord and Rev. Hans Kouwenberg did not disappoint. He preached a challenging sermon based on the parable of the prodigal son. He pointed out that the elder brother had characteristics that were most like the typical Presbyterian. In the Greek language the word for elder is presbyter and so the second son is clearly the Presbyterian brother. Following the service Park was elected Moderator. This is the first time a Korean pastor had been offered this highest office in our church. The fact that the official nominee is chosen by all the ministers and elders in presbyteries across the country by secret ballot, declares to all that this is not merely a top down politically correct agenda but a wide spread heartfelt commitment. It is hoped that as the Moderator travels across the church this year he will carry like a health giving virus the deep evangelical zeal and passionate prayer that the Korean congregations are known for.



The second was the Wednesday evening event put on by the Renewal Fellowship Eastern Ontario Team. It was a fine dinner hosted at St Paul's and prepared by Irene Nesbitt in memory of her late husband, Rev. Bill Nesbitt. This was followed by a tour of Parliament Hill in which we first met with several members of Parliament in the Wellington building (across from Parliament). They represented several of the parties and shared what faith meant to them as parliamentarians. One cabinet minister shared how in all that she does she sees herself first of all as an ambassador of Christ and by implication urged us in all that we do to see ourselves in the same light. Several

talked about the high hopes they had in coming to Parliament to change the ethos of conflict to a spirit of co-operation but that was something they had not yet achieved. I got the distinct impression they had almost given up on that one. Another MP said how important the work of the church was and that we needed to especially focus on passing the faith and values on to the youth of this nation if we hoped to have stability in our future.

A third veteran MP shared his life story. He told of how as a young man he had got caught up in alcohol and a destructive life style but one Easter Sunday as he sat in a hotel room contemplating suicide the voice ►



of God came to him and called him to turn his life over to God. He did this and God led him to parliament. He encouraged us to realise that Government can't do it all and that only the power of Christ can transform people from the inside out.

Another MP spoke of the important contribution that faith communities make and that they indeed had a place in the public square.

The third thing that was moving and impressive was our interaction with First Nations people on a couple of occasions. Tuesday was a presentation of reconciliation with elders from the native community. It involved drumming and some traditional and contemporary native dances from across North America. Perhaps the thing that moved Assembly the most was when there was a spontaneous call for the Moderator to verbalize our confession to the First Nations people present for our involvement

with the residential school. This he did with grace and humility. It was obvious that many present were deeply moved at the sincerity. It was equally clear as one native elder put it as she wiped tears away saying: "I have never heard an apology before. Thank you."

What impressed me the most however was the vision for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission articulated by Bob Watts, the Executive Director of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. While not ignoring the deep hurt that needed healing there was also a need to remember the positive experiences of some who attended the schools and move ahead together for a better Canada. He used the image of spring ice. If handled roughly it breaks in our hands but if many hands lift it carefully it can be used to see a rainbow of colours we otherwise could not see. These moments were full of hope and expectation and served as an important model for the Government's confession made the following week.

The last event relates to an earnest debate in the Assembly related to the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee and a response to an overture that urged the Assembly to affirm the exclusiveness and uniqueness of the saving work of Christ ... and to in-

struct the Committee to do all its work within this reality. The committee recommended the prayer be not granted since they felt they already did all their work in this context. After an intense debate that centered as much in trying to defend the Committee as dealing with the issue the motion was defeated although so narrowly it required a standing vote. Another amendment was put forward that did affirm the uniqueness of Jesus and it was passed with only a few voting in the negative. What did this strange procedure mean? Upon reflection I don't think it was necessarily that we were double minded but in true Presbyterian fashion we wanted to affirm our commitment and confidence and support for Interfaith Dialogue but at the same time we wanted to affirm that in any work we do we must always remember that we are the Church of Jesus Christ, who is uniquely the saviour of the world, and our dialogue cannot compromise that truth which is at the heart of all we do.

It ended being a solution most could affirm as we go forward together into the next year. ■

*Calvin Brown is Executive Director of the Renewal Fellowship within the PCC.*

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# Rejuvenating & Refreshing

A conference on how to get away and deal with stress.

BY EMILY WIERENGA

**"M**inistry can be never-ending and consume us and our time," says Rev. Dr. Christine O'Reilly. "I have made plenty of mistakes, and am very much a learner in the area of rest and balance."

Having been a single parent for 17 years and a minister for 21, O'Reilly knows the value of rejuvenation—a theme which she recently addressed as plenary speaker for the Heart, Mind and Soul Conference, a retreat for female lay persons and clergy at Presbyterian College, Montreal, in late May.

"I have had times of discouragement, times of fatigue, times of uncertainty and wondering about where God was calling," O'Reilly told the *Record*. "The times of real exhaustion have come when I have not been grounded and centered in prayer, silence, scripture reading and reflection. This also comes in times when I have taken on too much, when I am trying to run on my own strength, and not taking care spiritually and physically."

Pastors, says O'Reilly, often confuse human need with the call of God. "To not have a 'boss' to report to, a work day with set hours, and the kind of work that in many ways is never really finished: there is always another sermon to write, visit to make, meeting to

attend or study to lead."

O'Reilly has created a sacred space in her backyard to which she retreats daily. "With just a few symbols, a place to sit, and my Bible and journal, I spend time there in solitude almost every day (daily is my goal), praying, reading scripture and listening."

The minister at Knox, Thedford, Ont., and St. Andrew's, Watford, Ont. also has a spiritual director as well as two support/accountability groups which keep her focused. One group is comprised of ministers who gather for worship and Bible Study; the other is a small gathering of trusted lay leaders "who meet periodically to offer their insights and perspective, and help me evaluate priorities, outside invitations and balance in ministry and personal life."

Heart, Mind and Soul was organized

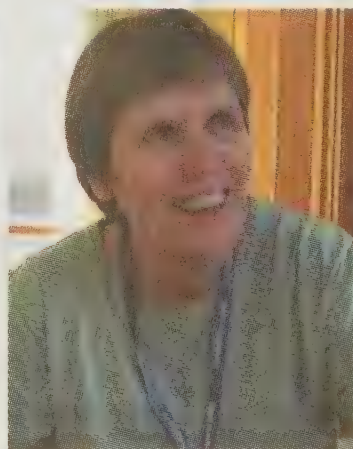
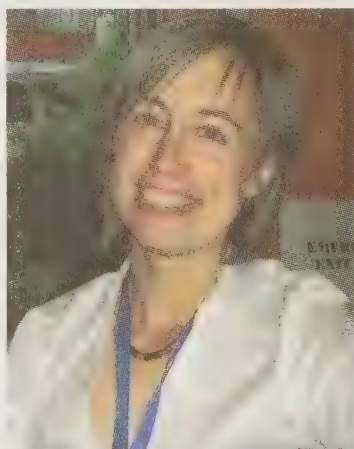
by Women in Ministry, a committee of Ministry and Work Relations.

Geared at rejuvenating and refreshing women involved in the Presbyterian Church, the conference was a two-year process, spearheaded by Dara Thompson Goulet, a student representative of WIM.

Funding was received from WIM and grants from both the Women's Missionary Society and the Experimental Fund. Workshops dealt with hobbies, stress, yoga, money and ministry, the importance of Sabbath keeping, how to set boundaries and issues of loneliness and isolation—each of which resonated with the women gathered from six provinces.

"I applaud the designers, supporters and leaders of this conference and the Women in Ministry committee, for the vision, dedication and perseverance in shaping and holding the conference," O'Reilly says. "Conferences like this one are important—not only for women in leadership, but all who serve leadership positions.

"I hope women went away with a fresh look at how Jesus is working in their lives. I also hope they regain strength, vision and assurance of God's love which empowers us in all our ministries, no matter what they may be." ■



**The Heart, Mind and Soul conference was spearheaded by Dara Thompson Goulet, left. Rev. Dr. Christine O'Reilly was the plenary speaker.**

# A Challenge to the Church

Each congregation is urged to try one new thing this year.

BY REV. CHEOL SOON PARK

As I write this it has been a month since my induction as the Moderator of the Church and I may be more familiar with new title but it was like getting a new name. Sometimes you really have to force yourself and others to accept that you are 'it', not 'that'.

My new business card says Moderator of the 134th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada under my real name. But many people were not ready to listen to the whole thing. They simply heard two words from the conversation and made up their minds. Alright, you are a Korean and a Moderator, so you must be a Moderator of a Korean church of some sort. I didn't try to correct everyone but most of them figured out by themselves and came back to me to verify their findings. It is true that changing old things is lot more difficult than creating new things.

I'd like to sincerely thank all of you for your support and prayers. It is truly an honor for me to serve and as I accepted the call to this new responsibility, I wondered why the Church had chosen me. My conclusion was that the Church wanted the change. During my term, I'd like to try to communicate with you across the country about the need for change. We are living in the society that changes so fast that everyone feels outdated all the time. I'd like to invite all of us to look at ourselves. Let us see

how much changes have been made since we started serving our congregations. Are we adequately prepared for the changes around us? Are we, as a Christian community, presenting any direction to the society and its people? Are we ahead of the crowd or just busy cleaning up the mess after the change hit us that we refused to prepare for?

There is a great demand for change within the local churches. It is not an option anymore, it is an imperative. We should start with our identity as Presbyterian. Canada has become a very complicated society as it opened its door to many other culture, languages, and religions. There should be a new definition of being Canadian and, of course, being Canadian Presbyterian. Yet we have been very reluctant to acknowledge the change, not to mention accept it. Church has been a hiding place for many refugees from the beginning of its existence but it cannot be, and it will not be a hiding place for the people who refuse to change.

We shouldn't be afraid of change because change brings new possibilities. We should welcome it. There are people looking for encouragement, comfort and answers in the world. They have the thirst and hunger that cannot be satisfied with worldly substance. We should go to where they are rather than waiting for them to come to our door. It is time to assess our attitude toward the society. It is



time to change our understanding of church, ministry and worship service. I'd like to challenge every session, minister, and member to start one thing new in this year. One thing that is necessary yet has never been tried for various reasons. It may be new music, different style of sermon, or even an outreach program. Please start one thing that will convey the message of your willingness to change and to serve. Let them know that you are there to share and you will be happy to give.

The Presbyterian Church has a proud history, wonderful structure and sound theology. Yet during the last few decades, we became more like a well-built castle on an island. And some of us fortified it to be qualified as 'the invincible.' But church cannot be an empty castle. Now we need to build a bridge that connects us to the towns and communities around.

It is time to change.  
Let us not delay any more.  
Let us start now.

*Rev. Cheol Soon Park*



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Pictou, N.S., St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Jeanette Fleischer, PO Box 142, River John, NS B0K 1N0; 902-351-2219 (s) or 902-351-2473 (h); jen.fleisch@ns.sympatico.ca.

### Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Beaconsfield, Que., Briarwood; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. John Vissers, Presbyterian College, 3495 University, Montreal, QC H3A 2A8; 514-288-5256 extension 201; jvissers@presbyteriancollege.ca.

Gloucester (Ottawa), Ont., Gloucester; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Adrian Auret, PO Box 609, Manotick, ON K4M 1A6; 613-692-4228; adrian.auret@sympatico.ca.  
Pincourt, Que., Ile Perrot; Mark Farrell, Convener, Search Committee, 242 Fifth Ave., Pincourt, QC J7V 5L3; 514-453-4796; markim@ca.inter.net.

### Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

Cambridge, St. Andrew's Galt; Minister of Word and Sacrament, Full-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Bill Bynum, c/o St. Andrew's Galt Presbyterian Church, 130 Victoria Ave., Cambridge, ON N1S 1Y2; knoxpreston@golden.net.  
Englehart, St. Paul's; Tomstown; Tomstown; St. Paul's and Tomstown Pastoral Charge, approximately 10 km. from Tomstown; Full-time minister; Search Committee Chair Randy Ford, PO Box 737, Englehart, ON P0J 1H0; treeline@ntl.sympatico.ca.

Markham, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Don Muir, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON M3C 1J7; 416-441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301 ext. 223; dmuir@presbyterian.ca; www.standrews-markham.ca/search.htm.

Mississauga, Dixie; Interim Moderator Rev. Reid Chudley, PO Box 16, Hillsburgh, ON N0B 1Z0; 519-855-6216; r.chudley@bellnet.ca.

New Liskeard, St. Andrew's; Full-time minister, single-point charge; Search Committee, PO Box 908, New Liskeard, ON P0J 1P0; 705-647-8401; standrewsni@paralink.net.

Nobleton, St. Paul's; Interim Moderator Rev. Chris Carter, 13190 Keele St., King City, ON L7B 1J2; 905-833-2325; cmcarter@rogers.com.

Peterborough, St. Giles and South

Monaghan and Centreville; Full-time minister for two-point charge; Interim Moderator Rev. Paul D. Johnston, 22 Hillview Dr., Bobcaygeon, ON K0M 1A0; 705-738-6424; knoxpres.paul@bellnet.ca.

Peterborough, St. Stephen's; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald, c/o Knox College, 59 St. George St., Toronto, ON M6S 2E6; s.macdonald@utoronto.ca.  
Scarborough, Clairlea Park; Half-time minister; Interim Moderators Robert and Priscilla Anderson, 174 Springdale Blvd., Toronto, ON M4C 1Z7; 416-469-5986; kimchiman21@hotmail.com.

Scarborough, Westminster; Interim Moderator Rev. Ann Blane, 1300 Danforth Rd., Scarborough, ON M1J 1E8; 416-267-7897.

Schomberg, Emmanuel; looking for a half-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Jeremy Lowther; 905-857-2419; jlowther1845@rogers.com.

### Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Binbrook, Knox and Carluke, St. Paul's; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Garfield G. Havemann, c/o Chedoke Presbyterian Church, 865 Mohawk Rd. W., Hamilton, ON L9C 7B9; ghavemann@chedokechurch.ca.

Burlington, St. Paul's; Part-time minister (22.5 hours); energetic and motivated leader to help us grow in faith and reach our community for Christ; Interim Moderator Rev. Steve Lindsay; 905-664-6043; steve.lindsay@3web.net.

Brantford, Knox and Mt. Pleasant, Mt. Pleasant; Interim Moderator Rev. Donald Young, 11 White Oaks Ave., Brantford, ON N3R 5N8; greenbrier@bfree.on.ca.

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Caledonia, Caledonia; Interim Moderator Rev. Jeff Chalmers, 117 Argyle St. N., Caledonia, ON N3W 1B8; 905-765-4524; jeff.chalmers@ontario.ca.

Fort Erie, St. Andrew's-Knox; Search Committee Chair David Randall, 495 Niagara Blvd., Fort Erie, ON L2A 3H2; 1-888-665-6681; drandall@cogeco.ca.

Hamilton, MacNab St.; Rev. Stephen Jenvey, c/o West Flamborough Presbyterian Church, 262 Middletown Rd., Dundas, ON L9H 5E2; 905-628-6675; minister\_wfpc@bellnet.ca.

London, St. Lawrence; Half-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Lynn Nichol, 783 Victoria St., London, ON N5Y 4C9; 519-434-2476; briarhill33@yahoo.ca.

Mitchell, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Catherine Calkin, 3403 Perth Rd. 130, R. R. 2 St. Pauls, ON N0K 1V0; 519-393-6395; calkin@quadro.net.

Port Dover, Knox and Hagersville, St. Andrew's (two-point charge); Interim Moderator Rev. Kathy Morden, Knox Presbyterian Church, 2058 Main St. N., Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0; 519-587-2565; knoxchal@bellnet.ca.

Sarnia, Paterson Memorial; Vacancy begins April 1, 2008; Rev. Ena Van Zoren, PO Box 421, Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0; 519-845-1931; enavanz@gmail.com.

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Thornbury, St. Paul's; Rev. Ted Creen, 865 2nd Ave. West, Owen Sound, ON N4K 4M6; 519-376-7886; ted.creen@standrewsowensound.org.

Thorold, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Graham Kennedy, 53 Church St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 3C3; 905-641-8868; gkenedy@niagara.com.

Tiverton, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Susan Samuel, 345 Durham St., Kincardine, ON N2Z 1Y6; 519-396-2311; ssamuel@bmts.com.

Wallaceburg, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Mike Maroney, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 60 Fifth St., Chatham, ON N7M 4V7; 519-352-2313; maroney@firstchatham.org.

## Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Brandon, Man., First; Interim Moderator Rev. Paul Sakasov, 338 11th St. E., Brandon, MB R7A 5W7; 204-727-2385; paul@pcbbrandon.com.

Carberry, Man., Knox-Zion; Interim Moderator Rev. Jean Bryden, 808 9th St. NW, Portage la Prairie, MB R1N 3L3; 204-857-4815; jbryden@mts.net.

Flin Flon, Man., St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Peter Bush, 197 Browning Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3K 0L1; 204-837-5706; peterwwpres@mts.net.

Selkirk, Man., Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. James Ko, 309 Strathnayer Ave., Selkirk, MB R1A 0H5; 204-785-9834; pastorjames68@hotmail.com

Thompson, Man., St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Peter Bush, 197 Browning Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3K 0L1; 204-837-5706; peterwwpres@mts.net.

## Synod of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon, St. Andrew's; seeking Minister to be part of a team ministry; Rev. Sandy Scott, Interim Moderator, 60 12th St. East, Prince Albert, SK S6V 1B2; 306-764-4771; sandy.scott@sasktel.net; www.standrews-saskatoon.net.

## Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Calgary, Alta., Trinity; Interim Moderator Rev. David Vincent, 56 Scenic Rd. NW, Calgary, AB T3L 1B9; 403-547-7700; dave.barbvincent@shaw.ca.

Chauvin, Alta., Westminster and Wainwright, Alta., St. Andrew's Pastoral Charge; Rev. Stephen Haughland, PO Box 663, Killam, AB T0B 2L0; 780-385-2147; tepkje@telus.net. Edmonton, Alta., Callingwood Road; Interim Moderator Rev. Bob Calder, 6607 31st Ave., Edmonton, AB T6K 4B3; 780-462-2446; crpc2007@gmail.com.

## Synod of British Columbia

North Vancouver, St. Andrew's and St. Stephen's; Rev. Dr. Brian J. Fraser, Interim Moderator, 1402-1327 East Keith Rd., North Vancouver, BC V7J 3T5; fraser@growingchurches.org. Slocan Valley, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Gavin Robertson, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 1139 Pine Ave., Trail, BC V1R 4R2; 250-364-0335; firstpc@telus.net. Vancouver, Kerrisdale; Co-Interim Moderators

Revs. Joyce and Glen Davis, 6040 Iona Dr., Vancouver, BC V6T 2E8; 604-822-9807; gdavis@vst.edu.

Victoria, St. Andrew's; Full-time assistant minister, three-year call; Convener Search Committee Colina Titus, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 680 Courtenay St., Victoria, BC V8W 1C1; 250-384-5734; colina.titus@gmail.com.

## Obituaries

**ANDERSON**, Lillian, died on April 21, 2008, at age 74. Lillian was a faithful member of St. Matthew's, Montreal, and First Presbyterian, Verdun, Que. She served the children in the Sunday School for more than 20 years and was an honorary life member of the W.M.S. She is greatly missed by her husband Lloyd, her daughter Catherine (David Taylor), son Lloyd (Suzanne) and grandchildren Olivia, Talia, Isaac and Alex. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

**CARTHEW**, Audrey, died May 2, 2008. Audrey, an elder at St. Giles Kingsway, Etobicoke, Ont., will be missed for her faithful and joyful prayer leadership.

**MORRIS**, Rev. J. J. Harrold, died suddenly on June 14, 2008. He served congregations in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario and was Moderator of the 115th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Harrold is survived by his wife Jeanette MacDonald; daughters Mary Jesse (Howard) and their children John and Christeen, Rev. Jean Morris (Matthew Vyse), Jo Morris (Graham Pelat) and their son Ian; step-daughters Tracey Methven (David Neale) and their son Timothy, Nicole Methven (Paul Smith) and their children Cameron and Hannah; predeceased by his wife Morag MacRae.

**YOUNG**, Rev. Wilbert Lawrence, B.A., B.D. "Bert" was born in Elderslie Township, Bruce County, Ont., on July 14, 1923. He graduated from Chesley High School, University of Toronto and Knox College. In 1949, he was ordained in his home church, the Salem Church, Elderslie.



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He served congregations at Fall-  
ingbrook, Toronto, Ont.; First, Pictou,  
N.S.; First, Collingwood, Ont.; and  
St. Andrew's, Hamilton, Ont. From  
1973 to 1983, he was the first General  
Secretary of the newly formed Board  
of Congregational Life. He returned to  
the pastorate of Caledonia, Ont., until  
retirement in 1989.

Bert was a distinguished minister  
of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.  
He served on many committees and  
boards of the church at large. In 1968,  
he represented the Board of Evan-  
gelism and Social Action at the first  
World Congress of Evangelism held in  
Berlin. Bert and Velma remained active  
in retirement, giving pastoral support,  
wise counsel and teaching lay devel-  
opment. Upon returning to Hamilton  
in 2000, they became members of  
Chedoke Church, which honoured  
Bert by naming him Minister Emeritus.  
For the past three years, Bert and Velma  
have attended Knox, Crieff, Ont.

During his Collingwood days, Bert  
bought his grandfather's farm over-  
looking the Saugeen River in Bruce  
County, and it became a gathering  
point for the Young family and a host  
of friends. After his death on April 30,  
2008, it was most fitting that Bert's  
funeral should be held in the surround-  
ings he loved. Bert is survived by Velma,  
his wife of almost 60 years; daughters  
Jane, Mary, Nancy and Peggy; son  
Stephen; sister Edith; 11 grandchildren  
and two great-grandchildren. He was  
predeceased by his brother Hardy. ■

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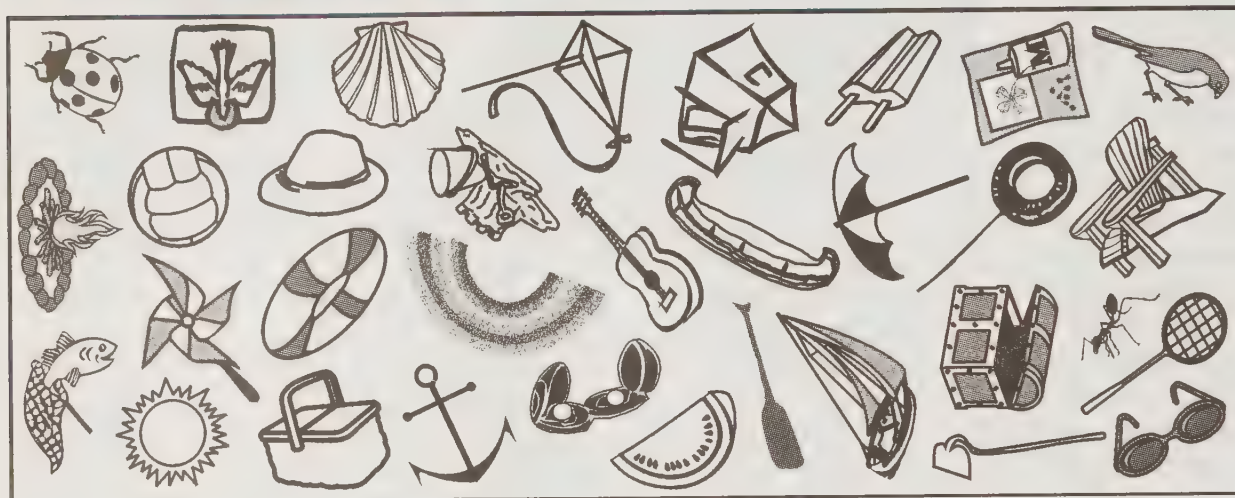
# Called to Wonder

## Picture Pilgrimage

Each of the boxes below contains pictures of many different objects. Can you find FOUR objects that are in ALL three boxes?

(SOLUTION ON PAGE 18)

CREATED BY JENNIFER O'FARRELL



### HINTS:

Mathew 13:31-33

Mathew 13:44

Mathew 13:45

Mathew 13:47



my laptop computer's concordance, I found the verse. It is of course from the book of Job, from Eliphaz's pithy observations about life in Job 5:6-7: "For misery does not come from the earth, nor does trouble sprout from the ground; but human beings are born to trouble just as sparks fly upward."

I don't like Eliphaz very much in the book of Job, partly because he treats Job so poorly and partly because what he says, for the main part, is so true. I particularly don't like to hear what he says in Job 5:6-7, the point of which is that my afflictions and troubles are not often accidental; they don't usually just spring out of the dirt and bite me in the butt. Most often I bring them on myself by the choices I make. And in as much as all this is true, I bear responsibility. "I am born unto trouble, as sure as sparks fly upward," says Eliphaz. I seem prone to make sinful choices, and inevitably they bring affliction and trouble upon me. These choices just seem to flow from my life as easily as sparks dance upward from a bonfire.

Twenty-first century pop theology and psychology have developed an interesting approach with regards to people and sin. I think it's called denial. I think it started in the Garden of Eden. The way it works with me is, first, I start denying that I have sinned and then, I begin to deny that there is any real consequence with regards to my sin. When my body falls apart, its not because I sinned against my body by mistreating it for years. When a relationship goes in the toilet, its not because I sinned against that person in some way and never owned up to it or tried to put it right. When I begin to suffer spiritually, it's not because I sinned against God and have never come to Him in confession and sought forgiveness. My world has taught me to assuage my guilt for the sin I have committed against myself, other people and God, by denying responsibility for it. The real kicker in all of this denial stuff with regards to sin is that it prevents me from drawing on the wonderful means of grace called confession. Confession is owning up

to personal choices of sin that I have made. This means owning up to the sins I have committed against self, against my body for example. This means owning up to the sins I have committed against my neighbour, most often those closest to me. This means owning up to the sins I have committed against God, and ultimately all sin is against God, or so the Psalmist says in Ps. 51:4. Confession is taking responsibility and saying, I know I did it; in my gut, even when I try to deny it, I know I am responsible for my sin and for its consequence. As the Psalmist puts it, "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." (Ps. 51:3)

Taking responsibility for sin is so important because it leads to confession. Confession is a deeply healing thing because it leads to forgiveness. John R.W. Stott, in his book *Confess Your Sins*, quotes the head of a large British mental home: "I could dismiss half my patients tomorrow if they could be assured of forgiveness." Confession leads me to the place with self, neighbour, and ultimately God, where I can cry out with the Psalmist: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." (Ps.51:1-2)

And here is the thing. As I confess my sin, the very word of God promises me that I can absolutely count on this truth: "If we confess our sins, He who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 Jn:1.9) It's just as true, or so it seems to me, that if trouble and affliction flow out of sin, as sure as sparks fly upwards, that healing and wholeness flow out of confession and forgiveness, whether it be regarding self, neighbour, or God. ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry. His books include Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.*



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# Sparks Fly Upwards

Healing and wholeness flow out of confession and forgiveness. BY DAVID WEBBER

“That’s strange,” said Chelsea. “What’s strange?” asked Linda.

“Well, I think I just saw a firefly.”

“How do you know it was a firefly?”

“Well, it was like a fire spark but it didn’t fly upward,” said Chelsea. “It flew kinda sideways instead. It looked so strange it almost looked like something extraterrestrial, something alien.”

There was a brief pause. “There it is again,” said Chelsea. “I’ve never seen one before, but I am sure it was a firefly.”

I was lying flat on my back in the bed of our travel trailer recovering from a marathon day of driving through northeastern Ontario. At the end of the day we had somehow landed just outside of Belmont, Man. We were nestled in the beautiful Kiche-Manitou Campground in Spruce Woods Provincial Park. Hearing Chelsea and Linda, I shook off the sleep that was overhauling me and crawled out of bed to

see what they were talking about. By the time I had extricated myself from semi-consciousness, four inches of goose down and the embrace of our Labrador retriever Bud, there was a firefly convention happening in the leaves of the aspen grove just outside our travel trailer. The girls were standing outside, oohing and awing. All around them the “lightning bugs” were flashing their little bottoms. The aspen grove looked like it was ablaze and sparks were flying everywhere. But not one spark was flying upwards like fire sparks do. The frantic buzzing horizontal movement of the “sparks” actually resulted in one firefly coming right over Chelsea’s head. It landed on the trailer awning almost touching her nose. She was suitably impressed and giggled.

Eventually we went back inside the trailer and left the flies to their midnight mating fireworks. Linda and I regaled Chelsea with firefly tales from our childhood. Linda told about building firefly

lamps using a pickle jar. I told about my dad traipsing home after a date, inebriated just enough so that when he saw a host of fireflies in a neighbour’s hayfield he thought he was being haunted by the “will-o’-the-wisp.” He ran the two miles back home at a dead run (Dad always had an overactive imagination). And then I crawled back into bed, wrestled Bud for my share of the goose down and went back to sleep.

Or at least I tried to. The fireflies had started to stir up a Bible verse in my memory, and I’ll be darned if I could remember where it was. I asked Chelsea for her Bible because mine was buried in my briefcase under the bed. I could remember a portion of the verse, “... sparks fly upward,” but the more I looked, without the help of a concordance, the more frustrated I became. Finally I gave it up and rolled over to try another attempt at out-snoring Bud.

The next morning, with the help of

continued on page 49



The Grand Hall of the Museum of Civilization, in Ottawa, is in the shape of a canoe passing by native villages along the coast line. The location was not only stunningly beautiful but also proved prophetic for the commissioners' dinner on Monday June 2.





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September 2008

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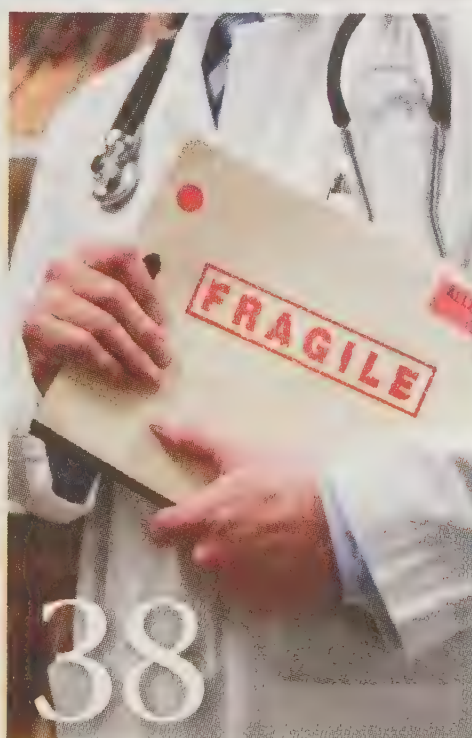
*"When I consider  
your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which you have set in place ..."*

*—Psalm 8:3*





# YOUTH IN MISSION



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# SUBSCRIBER PRIVACY PROTECTED

But mailings help  
pay the bills.

BY DAVID HARRIS

To all those readers who were surprised and offended in any way to receive a recent mailing from an insurance company in a *Presbyterian Record* envelope, my profound apology for not having adequately explained the circumstances.

First, let me assure you of two crucial things: first, Johnson Insurance, an advertiser client of the *Record*, does not have your name and address. We mailed their material to you on their behalf. The board took great pains to make sure that Johnson does not receive any personal information about our subscribers.

Secondly, as with all advertising carried in the *Record*, no endorsement by the magazine or the board is implied nor are we in any partnership with the advertiser. Period.

So why did you receive this mailing (which the client requested only be sent to Ontario subscribers)?

One of the inevitable things about publishing a magazine is that costs always go up, while sales, the biggest source of revenue for many publications, are fragile at best and go down at worst.

Newsstand sales have plummeted; and for subscriber-only publications such as the *Record*, one story said simply that "flat [circulation] is the new up."

In short, publishing is difficult and expensive. Add to this the fact that Canadian companies are reluctant to advertise in religion magazines, and publishers and owners have to scramble to make ends meet.

That is why the board of the *Record* decided to accept the proposition from Johnson Insurance to have us mail information about their company's products to our subscribers.

Because this was the first time we had done business this way, however, we were unable to ask every subscriber for their permission to mail them third-party information. That would have taken a whole year to reach every subscriber. (We have now begun that process.)

So we did what we thought was the next best thing. We put ads in the *Record* before the mailing to let subscribers know that all they had to do was call toll-free, e-mail or write us, and we'd take you off the list to receive anything other



than the *Record* and what is packaged with it each month.

By and large, this worked. At the time of writing, about 99 per cent of subscribers had not objected to the mailing or asked to be taken off the list.

Most of us, after all, are used to the various ways companies try to tell us about their products and services. Marketing takes place because it is effective—in other words, as consumers, we respond to the information and purchase the products and services offered.

But some people have wondered why the *Record* is engaging in this sort of advertising at all. The simple reason is that it helps pay the bills.

The *Record* is an independent non-profit, charitable corporation. Its main sources of revenue are subscriptions (almost 60 per cent), advertising (almost 25 per cent) and the annual appeal (almost 12 per cent). The remainder comes mostly from the federal government's Canada Magazine Fund.

On the expense side of the sheet are salaries (for one of the smallest staff of any denominational publication), printing, mailing and administrative costs.

Because we want as many people in the church as possible to receive the *Record*, we are always looking for new sources of revenue. The latest mailing was one of those opportunities.

Ontario subscribers who have not asked to be removed from the direct mail list may possibly receive one or two more mailings. Also, the board will be evaluating the overall response to this advertising approach and will keep you informed of future developments.

I hope this helps all readers understand our situation a bit better. Thank you for your loyalty. And please encourage others to subscribe. The more readers we have, the less it costs everyone. ■

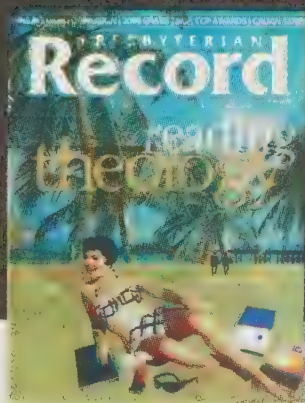
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "David Harris".



# Letters

letters@presbyterianrecord.ca



## Listen, then Speak Up

*Re Encourage Voice Then Listen, May*

After reading Andrew Faiz's May article I felt encouraged because in a rare moment of clarity (for me that is) I understood it! Yet at the same time I wondered what our compulsion toward having our voice heard is really all about. I can remember being a teen and having many of the feelings I heard expressed in the article about not having a place or a voice. As it turned out, the discontent was not about my own voice but a lack of another far more important voice in my life and, at times, in the church. I sometimes wonder if in our attempt to be heard or in our attempt to listen to so many voices (like wind, earthquakes and fire) we haven't crowded our ears with noise that prevents us from hearing that still small voice. I agree, we must be welcoming with open ears, but first and foremost we must welcome the One Voice—then listen!

LUKE VANDERKAMP, HUNTINGDON, QUE.

I was very encouraged by this article. The whole idea of groups that are marginalized, within and by the church is something we need to think about. It gives voice to a lot of thoughts that probably exist across the country. I also agree with David Webber that there needs to be more on rural issues in the *Record* as well as the lady from Saskatchewan regarding the West.

As far as the magazine goes, it is up to those of us that feel we are outside or have no voice are not covered by the *Record* to suggest or send articles about rural issues, the West, ethnic groups, youth or any other group

that feels that feels marginalized. We cannot possibly be heard if we do not speak up.

I include myself in this, as I live, write, minister and farm in a rural area and have chosen the West as home. Write about issues you are passionate about. They will not all be published, but the editors will at least hear our voice and be made aware of our concerns and this can all be used in determining themes for future issues of the *Record*. Let's find our voice where ever we can!

REV. BARB ALSTON, HARTNEY, MAN.

## Flak and Kudos

You took some unnecessary flak for the June cover of the *Record*. I hope you've received kudos for the arresting and beautiful one of July-August.

MARGARET ZEIDMAN KUKURUGYA, ORILLIA, ONT.

May I commend you and the artist for such a beautiful July/August cover. The cover is tasteful and imaginative. Well done.

REV. ROBERT FLINDALL, GRIMSBY, ONT.

## Beautiful Church Contest

Could you please send me the details of the contest?

JAMES K., VIA EMAIL

### Editor Responds:

Which is the most beautiful church in the Presbyterian Church in Canada? Hmm ... How do you define beautiful? Ahh, that's the trick of the contest!

Architecturally beautiful? Sure, that's a great definition, but it might favour some of the older churches with their grand beams and stones.

Beautiful setting? That's also ➤

# PRESBYTERIAN Record

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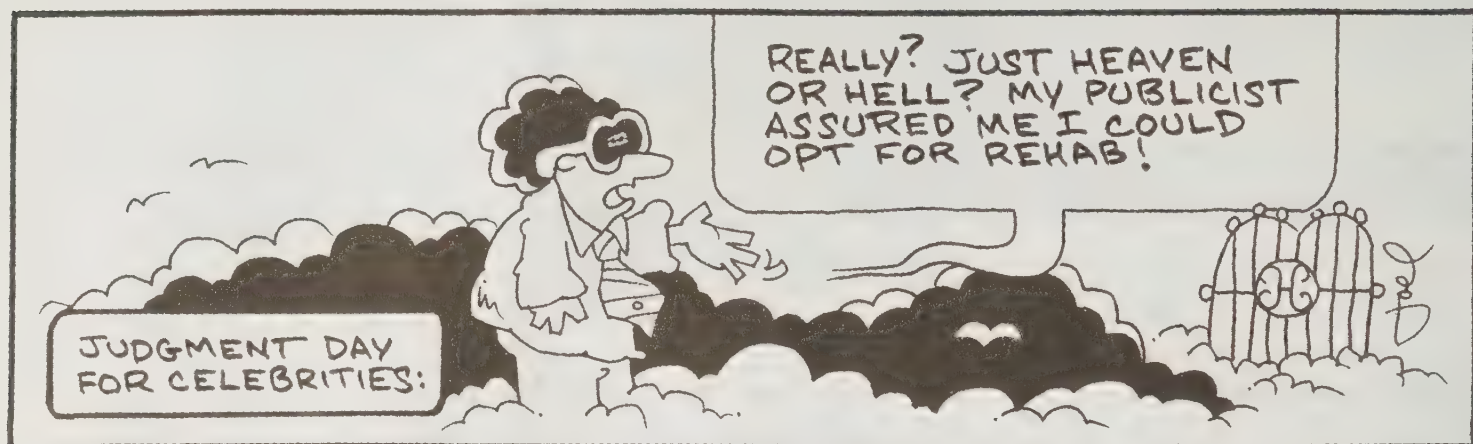
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## Pontius' Puddle



good, but it might favour some more rural churches set atop cliffs overlooking floating icebergs or majestic mountains.

Theologically beautiful? Yes! We leave you to define it yourself, and that could include architecture, location, mission, worship, etc.

Is yours the most beautiful church in the Presbyterian Church in Canada?

### Easier Said Than Done

Moderator Cheol Soon Park's comments are on the mark. However, making change into acceptable practice in the PCC is easier said than done.

Perhaps a start for the national church is to discontinue the use of numerical General Assemblies. Presumably the 134th was the one just finished, I can figure that out today. But what if someone refers to that 134th GA, 10, 20 or 100 yrs from now, who will know which GA it was? Or when was the 98th GA?

Much simpler for all time if this year's GA were to be referred to as the GA of 2008 (or GA '08). All the prior assemblies could be renamed using only the convening year.

MARTIN H. JURRIUS, WEST VANCOUVER, B.C.

### Peace and Compassion

Although I understand that a segment of the *Record's* readers will be unable to join me in this sentiment, I heartily congratulate the 218th General Assembly of the PC(USA) for their courage to love and be inclusive to homosexual members

of their church. In June, their assembly voted to lift any restriction to ordination and ministry on the basis of sexual orientation. One is left to wonder when the PCC will follow suit?

To those in our denomination who ignore an ever-increasing body of medical knowledge and cling to outdated and inaccurate interpretations of five scant, time- and culture-bound passages of scripture to promote their heterosexist worldview, I wish them peace and compassion. History shows that a progressive theology based on love and inclusiveness will always win out over time. Such has been the case in the battle for inclusiveness for people of colour in the United States and for women in churches everywhere; it will be the inevitable result for gay and lesbian Presbyterians as well.

In order to do justice now, the PCC must move to overhaul Chapter 6 of its woefully outdated 1992 Statement on Human Sexuality and take the steps necessary to welcome all of its members in the spirit of love and truth.

DERRICK CUNNINGHAM, COBOURG, ONT.

### The P in PCC

Will the PCC still be a national denomination in 20 years or will we be evangelical congregationalists?

More of our ordinands are getting their first theological education at evangelical colleges such as Tyndale or Regent, which are not Presbyterian. Are they then getting a Presbyterian ordination of convenience? Would

their worship services be recognized as Presbyterian? Are they using the PCC hymnal, supporting Presbyterian camps? Are they active in their presbyteries? Are they supporting the national church programs or their own projects? Why do they need as congregations or individuals to subscribe to additional statements of faith like those of the Renewal Fellowship or Northpoint Church Ministries or the Willow Creek Association?

Renewal Fellowship seems to now effectively control the Presbyterian College. Are Knox and St. Andrew's Hall far behind? Is there a place in the PCC for those of us who are not biblical literalists and who believe that gays and lesbians have an equal place in the church and believe that our church should be reformed and reforming. Our historic traditional Presbyterian Church in Canada is becoming unrecognizable. Is this what we want?

ROBERT EWING, KANATA, ONTARIO

### A Biblical Worldview

*Re Susan Macrae's letter, July/August*

She writes that she understands with diminishing hope that, as Calvin Brown states, "the Muslim faith is not on par with Christianity in its saving capacity."

This is not Calvin Brown's idea, it is God's. Nowhere in the Bible does God entertain or relax His position on another religion. The Bible consistently teaches that there is one God and that His plan of salvation is through



Jesus Christ alone. This is not an issue of favouritism but an issue of God's sovereignty and accepting the Bible as His inerrant and authoritative Word. The view that all religions are equal in offering salvation is a secular worldview, not a biblical worldview. Learning more about the faith and customs of other religions is a good thing. But should we not be first compelled to know the truths of our own faith? That only happens as we learn what it means to be a Christian, largely through our systematic and serious study of the handbook, to make sure the ideas we have are consistent with God's ideas. That is how we learn how to be a loving and respectful representative of God as we reach out and learn about our friends of other faiths.

We cannot pretend to represent Christianity if we don't know the truths of the Bible. I am personally thankful for Mr. Brown, for his articulate, biblical view, and his boldness and faithfulness to address the issues that are challenging Christianity today. May his tribe increase.

VALERIE JOHNSTON, KITCHENER, ONT.

## Correction

I apologize for an error in my letter published in the May *Record*. I did not write a letter re the residential schools to the AMS. I wrote to the President of the Women's Missionary Society. The old Eastern Division (now the AMS)

had nothing to do with aboriginal work; that task was undertaken by the Western Division (now the WMS). At the forthcoming Truth and Reconciliation Commission it should be the WMS representing the Church. The confusion of the two societies was my mistake, and my regrets are expressed to the Atlantic Mission Society and to the *Record*.

Recently I was in Winnipeg and visited Rev. Margaret Mullin and Warren Whittaker, and their co-workers at the Winnipeg Inner City Mission. Flora House and Anishinabe Fellowship Centre continue their good work, and Anishinabe Place of Hope is a wonder to see, a fine residence for folk who need assistance. Much of the work at WICM is among First Nations people, and we should be proud of this work undertaken by the Presbyterian Church in the north end of Winnipeg.

IAN S. WISHART

*Re A Terrible Natural Disaster*, July-August:

Lloyd and Willa Jones are the Baptists in Thunder Bay; Lloyd's brother (Rev. Dr.) Bill was editor of the Canadian Baptist.

AL CLARKSON, TORONTO

*More letters can be found on our website:* On Against Empty Prayers; Homecoming Scotland; a defence of Simple Religion and of Carey Nieuwhof.

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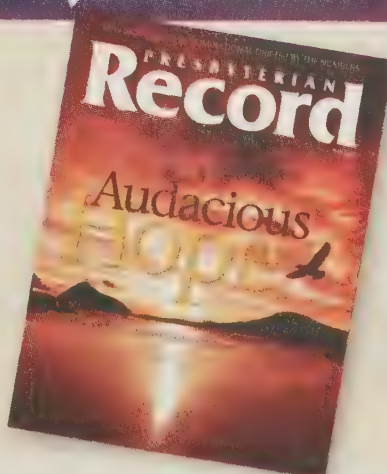
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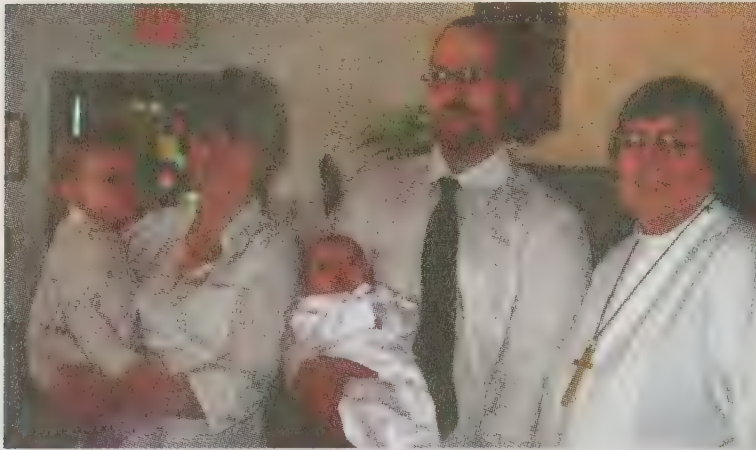
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# People & Places

To make People & Places submissions: [peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca](mailto:peopleplaces@presbyterianrecord.ca).  
Please visit the monthly PnP page at [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca) for more.



In the life of a congregation, as in the life of a family (and sometimes the two are hard to tell apart) there are hellos and goodbyes: witness Salem, Pictou County, Nova Scotia.

On Easter Sunday the congregation welcomed Brayden Martin Gaudet through baptism. He's seen with his parents Angela and Darren Gaudet, his sister Sydney, Bill Ross, clerk of session and Rev. Barb Fotheringham. And on our website scenes from a celebration of Charlotte MacDonald for her 12 years of service as choir director and organist by Joyful Noise and Friends Choir.



Later on in these pages you can read the testimony of a young woman who went as a nurse to Jobat, India. That's one kind of mission. Here's another, just as important, speaking as passionately from faith and conviction: the congregation of Chalmer's, Winterbourne, Ont., made blankets for the Children's Hostel in Jobat. These signs of their faith were dedicated and blessed in May.



Another great cake! The Mary and Martha WMS at St. Andrew's, Strathroy on Mission Awareness Sunday in April, with guest speaker Kenneth Kim, director of PWS&D. *From left:* Shirley McNeil, Virginia Campbell, Margaret Smith, Joan Wagner, Ken Kim, Gertrude Waldie, Julie Morden, Bea Veitch, Marilyn Howlett and Elizabeth Hehl. *Back:* Rev. Steve Boose, Marion Lumsden, Jill Morden, Kathy Boose and Karen Reid.



Rev. Allen Ye was inducted as minister for the English-language congregation at Vancouver's Chinese Presbyterian, in April, by the presbytery of Westminster and its moderator, the senior minister of Chinese Church, Rev. Morgan Wong. Rev. Ted Siverns preached at the service. Allen has for this ministry the glorious combination of having English as his first language, fluency in Cantonese and the ability to communicate in Mandarin. Chinese Church currently worships in Cantonese and English and prays that soon there will be a Mandarin ministry to address the gospel to the thousands of new Mandarin-speaking immigrants in the Vancouver area.





Do you want to see the future now? Note the names and faces—the Presbyterian Church in Canada is changing. On Sunday, June 1, nine new members were received and welcomed into the congregation of God's family at St. Andrew's, Maple, Ont.

*From left: Matthew Prasad, Daniel Safie, Stacey Safie, Chanel Prasad, Alan Eardley, Caroline White, Devi Jesuratnam, Rev. Robert Royal, Devika Ratnayake (holding future member, Christten), and Amal Ratnayake.*

The WMS Beatrice Scott Evening Auxiliary, at Tolmie, Port Elgin, Ont., recently celebrated their 60th anniversary. And, of course, on Mission Awareness Sunday this year, there was cake. They would like to submit this attached photo for the "People and Places" section of the .

The ladies are, from left to right, Wilda Lamont, Eileen Bates, Gladys Eby, Donna Kain, Ada Weatherall, Edna Clazie, Irene Eby.

### Had cake lately?

See [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca) for instructions on How To Submit Photos in the Digital Age.







## Witnessing History

Ann Calahan (far left) and Josephine Monkman were close friends at Birtle Residential School but hadn't seen each other in 50 years till they picked up their friendship again outside Central Block, Parliament Hill, on June 11, 2008. The lost time had no affect and they rebounded "like sisters."

The Presbyterian Church in Canada invited five survivors of our schools at Birtle and Cecilia Jeffrey, along with members of their families, to be present with Moderator Rev. Cheol Soon Park and other representatives of the church at the historic apology ceremony in Ottawa, which was delivered by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in the House. The Moderator and the five survivors attended a special reception following the apology where they met the Prime Minister, the Governor General, National Chief Phil Fontaine and other dignitaries. Some had copies of the apology signed by Harper and Fontaine.

Their family members, which included two other residential school survivors, watched the apology in a special viewing room in the West Block with Principal Clerk Stephen Kendall, former general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency Ian Morrison, and healing and reconciliation animator Lori Ransom.

# Fee returns from River Jordan

General Secretary looking forward to many years of continued friendship and work.

REV. DR. RICHARD FEE, General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, will be returning to his office this month after he was diagnosed with bacterial endocarditis with pulmonary edema in April and had to undergo operations on his heart which he describes in a notice of thanks in this issue of the *Record* (page 14) as "awe-inspiring and amazingly dedicated medical care."

Bacterial endocarditis is caused by common bacteria—related to the same source as strep throat—which develops slowly over weeks, exhibiting a wide variety of symptoms. This caused some early frustrations for Fee, who at first thought he had a bad flu and was misdiagnosed at least once in the beginning. The bacteria builds on the heart walls and the heart literally has to be scrapped clean of the infection. Fee's operation took several hours and he was hospitalized for about two weeks.

The bacterial infection may not have been caused by Fee's overseas trips, especially one to Africa, as previously

reported in the *Record*. The cause may have been more commonplace—a trip to the dentist. The American Heart Association has made a link between bacterial endocarditis and dental surgery, along with other common procedures like tonsillectomy and gall bladder surgery. A direct causation link in Fee's case has not been established.

In a letter to family and friends, Fee described his ordeal this way: "I told some people that I was taken to the River Jordan. I was urged to get my feet wet. I then actually went up to my waist (some say up to my neck), but I did not cross over to the other side ... I am grateful for life, to the Author of all Life who gives all of us a heart, both physical and spiritual."

Rev. Ian Morrison, former general secretary, sat in for Fee till the end of July. In an email to national staff Morrison wrote, "I have enjoyed renewing old acquaintances and getting to know new staff. However I am happy that I can have another attempt at 'retirement.'" ■



# Kettle Top Padre

First Presbyterian Chaplain General. BY EMILY WIERENGA

REV. DAVE C. KETTLE, who is on the rolls at the Presbytery of Ottawa, was named Chaplain General of the Canadian Armed Forces in August, making him the first Presbyterian to hold the title. In July Col. Kettle had also been named Brigadier General.

A graduate of Knox College, Toronto, Kettle joined the Canadian Forces in 1981 after having served a three-point charge for the church in Mount Forest, Ont. As a chaplain he has served across Canada and on United Nations and NATO posts in Bosnia, Croatia and Rwanda.

"I have seen some of the terrible things that people can do to each other due to ethnic and religious strife," he says.

"I am a man of God in uniform," he says. "I do not have a job; I have a calling. I have been called by God to serve soldiers, sailors and air personnel and their families anywhere, anytime."

Since being promoted this past February by the Honourable Peter Mackay, Kettle has become responsible for the recruiting, training, career development and well being of all chaplains. He is also required to give counsel to the Chief of Military Personnel and the Chief Defence Staff on all mat-

ters of a spiritual, religious or ethical nature. He is the chief spokesperson for the Chaplain branch for all media enquiries; a chaplain to all senior leadership within the Canadian Forces, and a strategic leader.

"The question that preoccupies me is not where does the Branch need to be this year and next, but where does the Branch need to be 10 to 15 years from now," says Kettle. "I intend to help our Interfaith Committee move the yardstick on Interfaith issues. During my term as Chaplain General all new chaplains will receive a formation in their second language in their first two years of training that will enable them to become functionally bilingual. And, chaplain health and well-being will be on the front burner throughout my term as Chaplain General."

"We live in a global community. Insurrection, famine, or natural disaster in any country ultimate touches every country. Today, no country can live in splendid isolation. Where ever peace is in jeopardy Canadians must do their share to maintain the peace in the world."

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## BUILDING HOPE

### Sunday at Anishinabe Fellowship Centre begins quietly.

**C**hairs are set up in the "big room" and meal assembly begins in the kitchen.

Mid-afternoon the doors open and individuals and families arrive for worship. There is a mounting noise level as people welcome each other and share the week's news. Then Rev. Margaret and worshippers begin to praise God with joyful singing in English, Cree and Ojibway. The children go to Sunday School while the adults hear the message. A "feast" is shared by all after the service (sandwiches, or soup & bun, or casserole, juice, coffee). All go home with a full heart and stomach.



*"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."*

— Matthew 25:35

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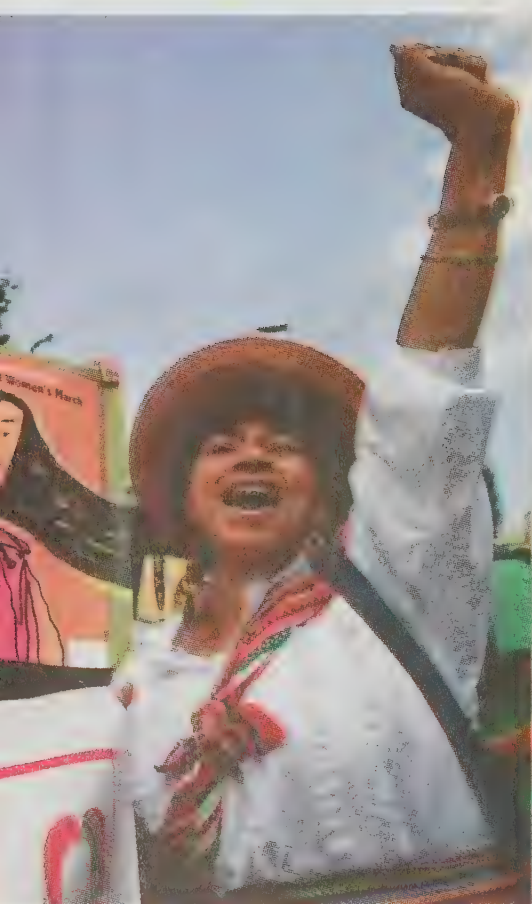
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# Youth Valued

Churches must open up their programming. BY LORNE KLETKE

YOUTH SHOULD BE and are actively involved in HIV and AIDS work, and this message was carried to Mexico City by young adults from several faith and cultural backgrounds.

Youth delegations attended the Ecumenical Pre-Conference in advance of the XVII International AIDS Conference, including Lutheran, Presbyterian and YWCA groups. Members of all three groups participated in a workshop that focused on engaging youth in HIV and AIDS work.

The topic of youth engagement is a complex one. "In El Salvador a youth activist is 15 [years old]; in North America it's 25," said Rev. Brian Rude, a Lutheran missionary from Canada speaking as a workshop participant. Other risks are universally present from an early age.

Michelle Verwey, a Presbyterian young adult from Canada, said that youth need to have a better invitation

from their church to participate. She added that youth may not be aware of their church's programming or partnerships in HIV and AIDS work, and might get lost when navigating church language in HIV and AIDS related documents.

Yet Verwey said that youth living within a faith community with an interest in HIV and AIDS activism are likely to participate in programs run by faith-based organizations, if given the chance.

Verwey said that churches can add something to the HIV and AIDS prevention message that secular program can't exactly replicate, including "... the underlying message that you're of value, that your body is temple." ■

—courtesy of Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, which sponsored the Ecumenical Pre-Conference ahead of the IAC in Mexico City in August.

## CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY

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27 SEPTEMBER 2008

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10:30 "RALPH CONNOR'S  
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11:30 "EVANGELIZING THE  
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## NOTE OF GRATITUDE

In scripture, the human heart is the centre of the human person; it is where physical and spiritual life are concentrated. The New Testament even speaks of the heart as being the dwelling place of Christ, ("... and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith..." Ephesians 3:17), in which reigns the peace of God, ("And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body;" Colossians 3:15)

Over the last several months I have learned much about the human heart – both the physical and the spiritual. In April, I was diagnosed with bacterial endocarditis with pulmonary edema. To correct this illness, I was the recipient of awe-inspiring and amazingly dedicated medical care.

During this period of time, I also learned that our church's heart is large and caring. Our church expresses the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in remarkable ways. I have been the recipient of overwhelming and sincerely appreciated gestures of kindness and support. For this, I am very grateful.

I stand in awe of the advances in medical care and the skill that was exercised to restore my health. I am very grateful to my family for their extraordinary love and care throughout this time. I am sincerely grateful to congregations, presbyteries and church groups, for the prayers that were raised when I was under intensive medical care. I owe a large debt of gratitude to the entire staff at the National Office of our church and to those within the Life and Mission Agency who took on extra duties to ensure that all things have gone smoothly. Their prayer support will remain with me for a very long while. I will always retain a deep gratitude for the remarkable gestures of compassion and care transmitted across many time zones from our several partners overseas and from ecumenical organizations with which we are in mission. Above all, I am grateful for life, to the Author of all Life who gives all of us a heart, both physical and spiritual.

Rick Fee



# A Grand Happening

Reflections on the PC(USA) General Assembly. BY STEPHEN KENDALL

AS SOMEONE who actually gets excited about General Assemblies, attending the annual gahering of the PC(USA) in San Jose this June was like a rock fan going to a U2 concert, a tennis novice attending Wimbledon or a law student stepping into the Supreme Court. You cannot help, as a Canadian Presbyterian, being struck by how big everything is. The display area is 50,000 square feet; most days had 20 or more events taking place; the Assembly Hall is equipped with four camera angles, a 30-metre JumboTron, a full video, light and audio live production facility complete with an off-duty ESPN producer firing the motions and amendments onto the screen faster than football stats at the Super Bowl. There were 750

voting commissioners and 225 advisory delegates seated on the Assembly floor, each one equipped with a laptop computer (a requirement, partly since the business binder, if printed, would be about eight inches thick). Behind commissioners are rows of press, ecumenical visitors, guests, and observers (primarily from affinity groups interested in the outcome of the votes affecting their constituency) numbering close to 3,000. You cannot help but feel this is an 'event,' a



Stephen Kendall, right, with a PC(USA) delegate in San Jose, Calif.

happening. The buzz is evident everywhere. Of course, Presbyterians are just as friendly in the States and our colleagues extend very kind hospitality to their guests.

But apart from the scale, what ➤

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Cost: Suggested donation of \$10.00 to offset the cost of lunch



*A Grand Happening, continued from page 15*

else is different between our two assemblies? What might we learn from theirs?

The role of young people is very important at both the PC(USA) and the PCC assemblies. We value the voices that our YARs bring to our assembly. Young people have a similar role at the PC(USA), but there are more of them. Each of 173 presbyteries sends a youth delegate. With 750 commissioners, an additional 173 young people is sure to have an impact. Although the Youth Advisory Delegates do not have a counted vote, they, along with the other advisory delegates have an advisory vote. This means that the Moderator asks the advisory delegates to vote electronically ahead of the commissioners. The result of the advisory vote is put on the screen for the commissions to see and the Moderator will say "Commissioners, you have been advised, you may now vote." Do the advisory votes influence the commis-

sioners? And would that be a problem? It's hard to say, but the commissioners at least know what the youth, students and ecumenical delegates think on any given issue as they discern their mind. As an onlooker, it was fascinating to be able to see how various groups were voting.

There seems to be a high level of expectation that commissioners will prepare well, be in their places on time, and be present throughout the assembly. As a clerk, I suppose I am a little more sensitive than some to this! One evening when the business went on past 11 p.m. I must admit that even I petered out and headed for my room! The commissioners soldiered on until finally enough of them convinced the Moderator to let them go to bed. The next day the Stated Clerk commented to me that one of his accomplishments had been to ensure that no business sessions go beyond midnight!

Over the years, the PC(USA) has

developed an interesting process for engaging commissioners in the work of the assembly. Clearly every commissioner could not hope to digest all the business—there is simply too much. So each and every commissioner is appointed (randomly, with considerations of clergy/lay, gender and ethnic balance) to serve on one of 18 committees. All the business is 'triaged' to these committees and the recommendations to the assembly are based entirely on the fast and furious work of these committees. They range in subject from bills and overtures to peacemaking and justice issues, to church orders, to governance, to youth. These committees meet from Sunday evening to Tuesday. During their meetings the advisory delegates (e.g. youth, ecumenical and students) are given both voice and vote, and the committee will receive testimony from a wide variety of people (not necessarily other commissioners) who wish to address a particular item. Often there are line-ups out the door and down the hall of those hoping to speak. Committee reports and recommendations are prepared by Wednesday afternoon when the assembly business meetings begin. Each committee will bring forward a consent agenda of the items about which they were unanimous, and specific recommendations for all other items. This way the assembly is spared dealing with the approximately 1,000 items of business separately.

As a clerk of assembly, it was a great gift to be present at the PC(USA) assembly with good colleagues and friends from south of the border. It provided a very interesting and helpful glimpse into how another assembly functions. It also made me more grateful than ever to be serving our own denomination. And yes, the PC(USA) General Assembly also spends too much time fiddling over where the comma should go in an amendment to an amendment. After all, we are Presbyterians! ■

*Rev. Stephen Kendall is Principal Clerk of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.*



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# Food costs rising

CFGB needs additional funding. BY EMILY WIERENGA

AN ADDITIONAL ONE-TIME \$5 million to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank will provide temporary help to the agency in light of increasing food prices around the world, says executive director Jim Cornelius. "Our early estimates were that the rising cost of food would reduce our food aid programming by at least 25 per cent in the coming year—and probably much more." The subsidy announced in April by Beverley Oda, Minister of International Cooperation, will "help us address the shortfall."

While donations in 2007 were at a record high of \$8.4 million, CFGB hopes to see that raised to at least \$10 million in light of the growing need. CFGB receives \$20 million from the

Canadian International Development Agency. "With the increased demand that this food crisis is causing in developing countries, however, we anticipate even more requests to support the growing number of people who can't afford to buy food," says Cornelius.

Over the past 10 years, the amount of cereals consumed globally has surpassed the amount produced by farmers—just enough to gradually reduce global food stocks from about five months in 1998 to less than two months in 2006.

Heather Plett, communications officer for CFGB, recounts a recent trip to India and Bangladesh in response to Cyclone Sidr—a storm that devastated villages along the Bangladeshi coast, killing thousands of people and destroying homes, livestock, and fishing boats. While providing rice to several villages in the Barguna area, Plett says, "I met with some of the people who had been impacted. One older man took me aside and said, 'We appreciate the help we have received from you, but we need



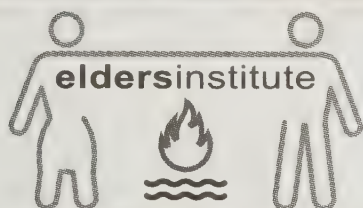
more. Our people are still hungry."

Since then, CFGB has committed to a follow-up program which gives the villages access to food as they rebuild their lives.

"Unfortunately, in those four short months, the cost of rice has doubled," says Plett. "Committing to this project means that we may have to turn other requests down unless we can mobilize resources from donors and the government."

In addition to giving more funding, the federal government has said it will untie its food aid program, allowing CFGB more flexibility to procure food commodities from developing countries. This will allow food to get to hungry mouths faster and more economically and will ensure appropriate food is provided. ■

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## Calling for peace

**ENI**—The Roman Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe has called for a transitional authority to allow for a process of national healing, political reconciliation and economic rehabilitation. The ultimate goal is to have “a happy, united, just and prosperous Zimbabwe regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, religion and any other considerations.”

South African President Thabo Mbeki spent three days at meetings in Harare in August with Robert Mugabe, who has been the country's leader since 1980, the Movement for Democratic Change leader Morgan Tsvangirai, whose party was officially declared the winner of March's parliamentary elections and Arthur Mutambara, who heads a small breakaway faction of the MDC. The meetings were supposed to seal a deal to form a power-sharing government.

Mugabe claims to have won another five-year term in a presidential election in June, in which he was the sole candidate and is unwilling to cede his power. The election was internationally declared to be flawed.

## Racing against the clock

**ENI**—Faith-based organizations can play an important role in the response to HIV and AIDS if they abide by the best public health practices, says Dr. Julio Montaner, the new president of the International AIDS Society during the 17th International AIDS

Conference held in Mexico City in August.

“We know what needs to be done to respond effectively to the HIV epidemic. What is lacking is political leadership,” said Montaner. On a one-to-ten scale, he sees the global response to the epidemic scoring “between three and four.” This is a global average. By regions, he says, “North America must be closer to seven, Latin America to five, and Africa to two.”

Montaner is an Argentine physician who heads the British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, a programme at St Paul's Hospital, which belongs to faith-based care provider Providence Health Care, in Vancouver.

“We cannot say we are proud of the global response to AIDS. We are ashamed of the lack of implementation,” Montaner says. For every person who begins to receive treatment, there are between two and three who become infected with the virus. “We are in a race against the clock.”

The International AIDS Society describes itself as “the world's leading independent association of HIV/AIDS professionals,” with more than 10,000 members from 185 countries. The society convenes the International AIDS Conference every two years. The next conference is scheduled for Vienna in 2010.

## Macho attitude challenging

**ENI**—Rev. Ina Ngefar-Bara Pa of the Timor Evangelical Christian Church says she had to grapple with a “macho” society and a conservative congregation when she wanted to establish a program to support women's rights in her congregation in Indonesia's West Timor province.

“Reaching out to the men in our own congregation about gender and women's rights was a tough challenge as they accused me of wrecking homes,” she said. “And it was difficult pioneering this program perceived by many of my congregation as pornographic,” she says, referring to the reaction to her sex education component for young people.

Still, she persevered, and gradually convinced doubters about the urgency of her program that now runs a shelter for abused women, pregnant teenagers, and people living HIV/AIDS.

## Orthodox fraternity

**ENI**—The patriarchs of the Russian and Georgian Orthodox churches have issued calls for peace as military conflict between Russia and Georgia over the pro-Russian separatist enclaves of South Ossetia and Abkhazia escalated into the first war between countries with Orthodox Christian majorities in modern history.

“Today blood is being shed and people are perishing, and my heart deeply grieves over it. Orthodox Christians are among those who have raised their hands against each other. Orthodox peoples called by the Lord to live in fraternity and love are in conflict,” Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexei II said in a statement on patriarchia.ru, his official Web site.

## Protestants unite

**ENI**—Two global Protestant bodies, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council, say they are looking to establish a closer relationship.

“It is significant that several united churches around the world are already members of both bodies and have been a voice encouraging us to pursue closer relationships in the future,” said Rev. Robert Welsh, the general secretary of DECC.

The Geneva-based WARC said in statement that leaders of the two groups had agreed at a meeting in Nashville, Tennessee this summer to continue talking about “the development of a comprehensive partnership in pursuit of the visible unity of the Church.”

WARC has roots in the 16th-century Reformation led by John Calvin, John Knox and others, as well as in earlier church reform movements such as the Waldensians in the Piedmont valleys, and the followers of Jan Hus in the Czech lands. It brings together 75 million Christians in 214 churches.

The Disciples of Christ (which in some parts of the world is known as Churches of Christ), grew out of an early 19th century movement with origins in both the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The DECC is a council of 19 Disciples of Christ, Churches of Christ, United and Uniting churches established in 1979, and represents 4.5 million Christians around the world. ■



# Repent, Repent, Repent

It's not easy coming clean. BY ANDREW FAIZ

*When they said, Repent, Repent, Repent/ I wonder what they meant? The Future, Leonard Cohen*

I have to come clean: my June column, *The Spiritual iPod*, was stolen from an idea by Rev. Ian Fraser, of St. Columba-By-The-Lake, Pointe Claire, Que. Amongst his other titles and accomplishments, Fraser is also convener of the *Record's* board, making him my boss's boss. But, that's not why (exclusively) I'm coming clean—like Edgar Allan Poe's pathetic character, I can't take the guilt.

Of course, no guilt necessary. Not really. It's not like it's a unique idea to find secular songs with a spiritual theme. And, it's not like Fraser is the first person ever to come up with it. In Grade 12, I wrote an essay on Pink Floyd's *The Wall* from a sorta-spiritual perspective, what with all that Roger Waters' angst about the human condition, with a Hamlet-like whine about a missing daddy, waiting for some self-actualization to come through an existence in denial of Buddha's Third Noble Truth, that the end of suffering comes with denying all desire and will-full ignorance.

In Grade 11, I had written a similar essay on The Eagles' *Hotel California*, the song not the album, which one could argue, though I didn't at the time, is really really about Buddha's Third Noble Truth, or Christ's Beatitudes. And, then there's my life-long Bob Dylan obsession, which is largely about spiritual pursuits ... sorta ... kinda. (I went to a Seventies High School, all loosey-goosey, really low on academics, high on self-actualization, creating generations of new-Canadians who felt really self-worthy but were left with little usable knowledge and fewer skills; so, no wonder I felt some connection to Waters' character. "Teacher leave them kids alone!")

And, anyways, *Lost Pilgrims'*—Rev. Stephen Kendall, Rev. Hugh Donnelly, clerk of session Scott Cooper and Mr. David Linderman—eponymous debut last year could be considered a spiritual-iPod collection of songs (except, maybe, for Dylan's *You Ain't Goin' Nowhere*, which is about something,

perhaps even profound, I just don't know what).

Lastly, in my list of lame excuses to rescind my apology to Ian for stealing his idea, is, that, you know, Ian, I mean my boss's boss Rev. Mr. Fraser, is a grown-up and hardly needs my groveling, though I'm sure he's not averse to it. And, yet, despite all of these very good reasons, I feel guilty.

Another good reason: one could make the compelling argument that copywriting of intellectual property is an early sign of the apocalypse, because it corporatizes communality. There is a long and honourable tradition in folk and blues and also in literature, of borrowing, tweaking, stealing, manipulating the work of others. That's why there are several dozen hymns with the same tune; or

**It is a sad, sad situation that sorry seems to be the hardest word, or as Sir Elton put it, 'it's getting more and more absurd'**

several tunes for the same hymn, for example. It is a human communal experience; sharing of ideas, passing them on, building them. Ian sent an email to friends and me asking for songs with spiritual themes, and me, despite my early education, being no fool, recognized a good idea and shared it. So, really, what I did was extend the invite to the whole church, not just a select few.

So, really, I don't need to apologize; what I deserve is a thanks.

And, yet, that tell-tale heart.

I'm not one to quote Elton John (except for: "Mars ain't no place to raise your kids...") but it is a sad, sad situation that sorry seems to be the hardest word. Which is really too bad, or as Sir Elton put it, "it's getting more and more absurd," because I was hoping to get several dozen apologies cleared in this month's column. I guess I started with the wrong one that has way too many rationalizations; I should have started with something else. A wrong I couldn't rationalize—I just couldn't find it. ■



# YOUTH 2008

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KAGAN MCLEOD

## LEARN, DO, GO

A SHORT MISSION CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE. BY REUBEN ST. LOUIS



**MY HEART** started to beat a little faster as I sat in the meeting listening to the presenter. I could feel beads of sweat forming on my brow and flashes of me updating my resume and cleaning out my desk at national offices crossed my mind. The topic of discussion: Why short team mission trips don't matter. Being the Youth in Mission Co-ordinator for the Presbyterian Church in Canada and a person whose livelihood is based around sending short-term mission teams, you can forgive my nervousness and desire to yell "heresy" at the presenter. Even though I had always had nagging suspicions in the back of my mind whether what I was doing was really having a lasting impact, I could always point to a few success stories to ease my conscience.

Now before I get too far let me assure you that I do believe in sending short term mission teams; and, in the end, so did the presenter. But the problem that remains for us to solve is how can this way of doing mission leave a lasting impact on the participants and the communities they visit?

I guess some people do go to the mountain-top, have a strong experience, then go back down the mountain and forget what the view was like at the top. This can be certainly true of a mission experience. While on the mountain we start to take a new shape only to find that we do not fit our old lives and very often settle back into our day to day routines, the experience, only a memory.

On the other side, what about the commu-

nities who hosted these wonderful people? Are they left only with a painted building and the promise of an email that may never come? The real question is how do we keep the fire that was lit going?

I prescribe three things, which are by no means revolutionary, to tend the fires of mission: Learn, Do, Go!

First, learning about another culture, its history, struggles and celebrations, gives us a basis to understand and the kindling to allow God to open our hearts. Second, working or "doing" together in a genuine partnership can be the spark that ignites the fires of compassion. That initial burst of flame grows higher as we share in a common ministry together. Last, and most important, we must go further. Any fire will die if it is not given something more substantial to feed on. As we return home we must respond to what we have seen and what God is calling us to. We need to be challenged to put our faith into action. I don't see a short-term mission experience as an end in itself but as a beginning of a rip-roaring inferno.

The following articles are written by youth and young adults and share how they put Learn, Do and Go into practice. I hope they will inspire us to take to heart the saying "as a flame exists by burning so the Church exists by mission." ★

*If you are curious about participating in a youth mission, or participating in next year's Canada Youth 2009, Reuben is the one to contact: [rstlouis@presbyterian.ca](mailto:rstlouis@presbyterian.ca); 1-800-619-7301.*







# GIFTS AND TALENTS

MISSION IS AS SIMPLE AS REACHING OUT TO THOSE AROUND YOU. BY LAURA BLAIKIE



**I REMEMBER** watching my sister pack for camp: bathing suit, sleeping bag and flashlight all disappearing inside her suitcase. I was too shy to attend camp and was not fond of the dark or anything creepy crawly, but I always regretted not going. So imagine my surprise when at 25 I found myself packing my own suitcase for camp! While my artistic abilities are limited to googly eyes and glitter and my nature abilities include a keen knack for getting lost, the new Missions Animator position at Camp Geddie was an exciting prospect because a Youth in Mission trip to Nicaragua in 1999 had begun a lifelong passion for travel and volunteering.

The vision for having missions as a regular program was made possible by the generosity and persistence of many people. The mission study was based on the Atlantic Mission Society's *Enough Water for All* project and the country Guyana. Our first task was to define what mission meant. The children eagerly volunteered several thoughts; the most popular being a) super-spy missions b) helping people in other countries. It was decided that mission for the summer was, "when someone sends you to do something and you do it." Mission work can often appear as something foreign or far away, something we may be able to support but not do ourselves—in reality mission work is something each of us can do in our everyday lives. Therefore, our summer focus for mission encompassed several different aspects.

In *Enough Water for All* we explored the importance of clean water, accessibility to it and important water facts. We learned that we can help people without water; and, the loose

change children took to camp raised \$900. We also learned about water conservation here in North America and ways that we can save it in our daily lives, i.e., catching rainwater and using it to water our gardens. We also looked at local missions, such as donating food to the food bank, or helping out our neighbor. Most importantly however, mission also meant looking inward, for each child that came to camp that summer had gifts and talents. Often we look at ourselves and think we do not have much to offer, but that is not true. Mission work can be as simple as reaching out to those around us, lending a hand, or holding a door: God is in all these moments.

With our hearts focused on Him we have many things to offer indeed. For me personally, looking at the chaos and uncertainty that surrounds us daily in the world can be disheartening, but the children showed me time and again how God works in the world through the hearts and lives of those around us. We also had a guest stay with us from Guyana. Dylan taught us about his country, his culture and a very important sport, cricket! He encouraged and supported us all. While camp had a sharp learning curve (the most important being that any water themed game is more fun when it is dumped on your head!), the enthusiasm and insight shown through the children has forever left a mark on my own heart and are constant reminders that we all have special gifts and talents we can offer in service to God and others! ★

*Laura Blaikie worked at Camp Geddie, N.S., in 2007.*



# SHARING THEIR GIFTS

YOUTH  
ENERGIZED  
BY CY06 TAKE  
THEIR GIFTS  
ACROSS THE  
COUNTRY.

BY MAVIS CURRIE



**THERE HAVE BEEN** ceilidh's and sub lunches, pampered chef fundraisers and congregational games nights at three churches in the Presbytery of London this year—all events to raise money for an exciting mission trip adventure for youth within our presbytery. At the end of July, 20 young people and eight adult leaders from four churches will be travelling to beautiful North Sydney, N.S., to lead a Vacation Bible School program. In the afternoons, we hope to serve the North Sydney community in other ways, by engaging in meaningful community mission projects. In the evenings, we plan on "singing for our supper" at local Presbyterian churches—a wonderful way to build bridges with our east coast brothers and sisters in Christ.

The dream of a presbytery youth mission trip found its beginnings in Canada Youth 2006. The youth of our presbytery came home energized from the amazing experience of being in Christian community. The leaders who had attended CY06 realized that our young people's faith and commitment to Christ grew by connecting with the wider church. All who attended built relationships with youth and adults from other churches within the presby-

tery. We knew we needed to do more youth ministry together. We knew that our youth ministry would be stronger and more meaningful if we shared our talents and resources.

The presbytery's Youth Ministry Team began to dream about a Presbytery Youth Mission Trip. Some of our youth had expressed interest in a Katrina mission trip. Upon investigation however, we realized that new regulations meant that young people under 18 years of age would not be permitted to participate. In addition, the youth interested in the trip were talented and competent individuals, but not skilled labourers. In an effort to challenge our youth to use the gifts that God has given them right now, we began to explore the possibility of a Vacation Bible School mission trip. With the help of Reuben St. Louis, the Youth in Mission co-ordinator and Audrey Cameron, Executive Director at Camp Geddie, we were partnered with North Sydney Presbyterian. In the past, Camp Geddie staff had led a VBS program at North Sydney, but this program was no longer being offered. Many of the young people from London interested in the mission trip have never been outside of Ontario. The opportunity for them to share their

gifts in a different part of the country seemed like a perfect marriage. It is the hope and prayer of the Youth Ministry Team that this VBS mission trip will broaden the participants' understanding of the wider church, will be a vehicle for building strong Christian friendships within our presbytery and will enable mentoring in the faith.

Upon our return from Cape Breton, we hope to share our experiences with congregations within the presbytery by leading worship and offering evening programs. We hope to build on the excitement of this trip and explore ways that we can work together in youth and children's ministry and mission more close to home.

Right now, however, we are planning crafts, learning songs, making travel arrangements and counting our pennies. We are working together. We are praying together. We are engaged in ministry together, youth and adults, rural and urban, Ontarians and Nova Scotians. We are trying to be the church at its best for the glory of God. ★

*Rev. Mavis Currie is minister at Westmount, London, Ont. This article was written before the mission trip—go to [presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca) for a report from North Sydney.*



# NURSING IN INDIA

LEARNING NEW SKILLS IN THE TRADITIONAL  
BHIL FIELDS. BY MICHELLE VERWEY

**INDIA.** Those who have been there understand—they know the arduous task of conveying the tangible experiences of India. The overwhelming number of people, the colours, the sounds (the constant car horn honking, animal noises and religious services broadcast on loud-speakers in the larger cities), the smells, and especially the warmth of the people, stretched my senses to places non-existent in North America.

I travelled this year to the Bhil Mission Field, in the state of Madhya Pradesh for a nursing internship. The Presbyterian Church has been involved in mission in the area since 1898. When I read *Jungle Tales* by the first PCC missionary in the area, Dr. Buchanan, I was surprised to be experiencing some of the phenomena he wrote about in the early 1900s. The Bhil Field is an area traditionally occupied by aboriginals. I was living with retired missionary Pauline Brown in Jobat. Fifty-seven years earlier, Pauline told me, she was a young nurse setting off for India. The WMS eagerly selected her to begin a much needed community health network in one of the least developed states in India. Pauline's determination and hard work has won her many awards including the Order of Canada. Just imagine being in my position: on the crest of embarking on my professional life and being so heartily welcomed into such a role model's home

for seven weeks. Praise the Lord for his plan, because I certainly had nothing to do with this.

I began nursing in the operating theatre in the Jobat Christian Hospital. Learning to prepare surgical sets and autoclaving instruments is a skill I did not learn at home, nor was making cotton balls. (I felt extreme guilt when I thought of my experiences in the operating rooms in Victoria: the waste created from all the disposable items, not to mention the one-time-use-only equipment.) I likely saw more births in a week in Jobat than I would see in Victoria in a month. (Maternity nursing skills are hard to perfect in a city with a reputation for being a retirement destination.) Attitudes on this ward (childbirth as a natural experience) were refreshing compared to the "clinicalization" of childbirth at home.

I had the opportunity to learn about the structure of nursing in India through participation with the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife Students in Jobat and the Post-Basic BSc Nursing Students from Indore. Nurses working in mission hospital are paid up to 35 times less than those in private hospitals—yet they do it. I have great respect for all the families that sacrifice so much to do God's work.

Community health nursing proved to be very rewarding for me. With support

from PWS&D the Vindhya-Satpura community health programs offer 100 villages, maternal and child health programs, school health programs, minimal curative measures, encourage creation of village health committees, educate and organize Community Health Volunteers, run women empowerment projects, self help groups, income generating projects, agricultural improvement programs and many more. I participated in village visits to construction projects with migrant labourers to conduct HIV and AIDS screening, education and a general clinic.

I want to encourage other youth and young adult to get involved in Youth in Mission and other opportunities within the church. Where have you ever considered going? I encourage congregations to invite youth and young adults to participate because often an invitation speeds the discernment process. ★

*Michelle Verwey's mission experience started at camp, progressed through several YIM trips. Her India mission was also one part professional development—through UVic's School of Nursing. She is a member of St. Andrew's, Victoria.*





# COMMITMENT AND JOY

YOUTH OF ALBERTA SEEK THEIR MISSION. BY DIANNE OLLERENSHAW

**IN THE FIRST** chapter of Jeremiah, the prophet declares: "Do not say, 'I am only a youth;' for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord." Jer. 1:7-8

What's Your Mission has been the general theme for young adult events in the Synod of Alberta and the Northwest for the past three years. It's part of a vision to bring young adults together in a network that builds community and invites them to explore their identity, calling and faith. In November 2006 we held our first retreat with workshops on the topics of Water: Life Before Profit, Restorative Justice and Partnerships with Aboriginal Communities.

In 2007 individuals from Edmonton agreed to take the lead in planning. We created the theme Hands-On-Mission—What Can You Do To Make A Difference? Our goal for the weekend was to build community among young adults, nurture their faith formation, develop a mission consciousness and encourage them to be active witnesses in the world. We spent time reflecting theologically, and engaged in small group discussion on issues of Healing and Reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples, Edmonton Urban Native Ministry and Amnesty International.

In 2008 we hope young adults

will facilitate another gathering with a focus on HIV and AIDS as well as poverty. At the 16th International AIDS Conference, the Toronto YouthForce challenged participants to get youth involved in the next IAC in Mexico. Covenants were posted in the Global Village by world leaders such as Stephen Lewis (Former UN

THE WHOLE BODY OF  
CHRIST BENEFITS FROM THIS  
INTERACTION AS WE SEE THE  
STRENGTH AND COMPASSION  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE GROW

Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa), Mary Robinson (Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights), Mark Wainberg (Co-Chair of the XVI International AIDS Conference) and many others. Dr. Peter Piot, Executive Director and Under-Secretary General of UNAIDS promised: "I commit to ensuring that the UN system will get its act together and respond cohesively to safeguard the rights of young people. I will promote inclusion of young people at the decision-making table in issues that affect their lives. I will also start a youth internship program at UNAIDS."

The Synod of Alberta and the Northwest accepted the Toronto YouthForce challenge and has been able to help

with registration costs for four young adults. Our original vision has grown and more funding was made possible through the Presbyterian Church in Canada to increase the number of participants from across the county. These young adults come from various academic backgrounds and will attend the Ecumenical Pre-Conference entitled, Faith in Action Now! and then the 17th International AIDS Conference.

Another recent initiative called the Synod Youth Forum was created last year. Invitations were sent to all four presbyteries to send two youth to attend the meeting. They met prior to the gathering of the court and reviewed some of the concerns of the church. Then they participated in the meeting, expressing their points of view.

In the church we are called to connect young people to mission in order to discover their gifts and calling. The whole body of Christ benefits from this interaction as we see the strength and compassion of young people grow as they are active in leadership and service. Their enthusiasm and passion in turn touches our hearts and acts as a catalyst for us to respond with courage, commitment and joy. ★

*Dianne Ollerenshaw is the director of regional ministries of the Synod of Alberta and the Northwest.*



# HOPE FROM CHAOS

MISSION IS A PARTNERSHIP. BY JEN CLARK

**THE MISSION** to Gautier, Mississippi was the most amazing experience. Those 10 days were the most challenging, yet rewarding of my life. I cannot even begin to describe the overwhelming emotion I felt when visiting the coast or talking with the homeowners of the house we were working in. For them everyday is a constant reminder of what they lost and the pain they endured. Sometimes living in a trailer in your backyard for two years can cause you to lose hope.

The slogan for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, a partner of the PCC, is Out of Chaos, Hope. Upon arrival in Mississippi our group agreed that it was a good slogan. However, by the end of the week we began to realize how true it was. As we started preparing to put a final coat of paint on the walls the homeowner was overcome and started to cry. As I stood crying with her she told me how she didn't think she deserved something so wonderful and how she never thought she'd see the day when the room would be finished. At that point I knew that she could see the light at the end of the tunnel and it made everything worthwhile. It had been a long journey, but she could see the progress and was so grateful for

our help in getting there. For me this mission was more than just building a home. In reality we were helping to rebuild their lives and give them hope in order to complete the journey.

Not only were we helping them, but also they were helping us. Mission is a partnership. I learned so much from the homeowners about generosity, faith, strength and humanity in general. I feel so blessed to have met them and know they were so welcoming. We had a great connection with them, which made it more rewarding knowing who was benefiting from our work. It was like building a house for friends. I was very grateful for the singing and laughter we shared.

The devastation is unreal. Pictures do not compare to the sights. I can't even begin to think about what people lost and the pain they are going through. There was rebuilding but I never expected that so many homes would be seemingly untouched after two years. Because so much time has passed we tend to forget about disasters like this, but these people live through it every hour. It's difficult to fathom that wind and rain can cause

so much destruction. It really put life into perspective and taught me not to take things for granted. Everything these people had worked for was swept away in a matter of minutes and there was nothing they could do about it.

We met so many wonderful people, and every single one of them was thankful for our arrival. I did not expect such a gracious reception. Although there had been so much devastation some people had been very resilient. Witnessing their strength, determination, and hope was truly inspiring.

I feel so blessed to have made new friendships, learned so many new things, and created great memories that I will carry with me forever. It was a life-changing experience. All the blood, sweat, and tears that went into this mission were worth it and I will never forget this opportunity as long as I live. ★

*Jen Clark is a member of Oxford, Ont., but lives in Halifax. She was a YAR @ GA this year.*





# WILLING TO BE

BY DOING MISSION, YOU SHOW LOVE,  
GAIN TRUST. BY HEATHER WOODS

**JESUS' INSTRUCTIONS:** Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Mission: the act or an instance of sending; a body of persons sent to perform a service or carry on an activity.

I attend Knox, Waterloo, Ont., and in 2005, our youth group decided that that's precisely what we wanted to do. Up until then we had done lots of fundraisers every year to send money towards other missions that other people were doing. In 2005, we decided that we no longer wanted to just send money, we wanted to do. So, as a group we began looking for connections that the church had or could make that could take us somewhere we could help. We learned about the Winnipeg Inner City Missions which runs programs out of two community centres in Winnipeg, Flora House and Anishinabe. So, the fundraising began.

We raised funds not only to get to Winnipeg, but also to buy dirt, sod and equipment for a park we were going to build, as well as for supplies for the kids we would be working with. In July 2005 a group of approximately 18 teens and six adult leaders got on a plane for our first real life mission experience. Once we arrived in Winnipeg,

we set out right away working and helping. We painted rooms, shelves and shutters; we helped on a Habitat for Humanity build; we ran kids' programs taking them swimming, playing games and running Sunday school classes; we organized and ran a picnic/carnival for Anishinabe; and we cleaned out, sold (via a giant yard sale) and reorganized Anishinabe's storage room. We did lots!

Personally, I expected to feel the most helpful when I did things for the people in Winnipeg; and at first, I was not wrong. But, soon I discovered that it wasn't the actual things we did that were making a difference, it was the love and willingness to help that made the impact. I went to Winnipeg expecting to teach and help; I came back having been taught and helped. While I was there, I learned that a lot of aboriginal people who live in inner-city Winnipeg (young, middle-aged and old alike) have been very hurt by the Presbyterian Church and "white people." They no longer have trust or love for "those white Presbyterians" (as we soon found we were labelled). But, as we worked, loved and listened to their stories, we quickly developed

our own respect for them and through that an amazing thing happened. The youth, then the adults, and eventually even the elderly began to talk to us. They began to approach us; they began to trust us. It was told to me after our trip that if any of the teenagers whom we worked with while we were in Winnipeg ever ran into a white kid in their neighbourhood, they probably would never have even given them the time of day, let alone spend a week working with them. I expected that all the manual labour I did would be what made a difference, but it was, instead, the walls we broke down, the friendships we made, and the trust we built. I learned that it's not what you do that makes a difference in peoples' lives, but the fact that you are there willing to do it and the love that you show by caring enough to help. ★

*Heather Woods is a member of Knox, Waterloo, Ont.*







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- Find out what your local congregation is doing to minister to the community's need (food banks, Out of the Cold, drop-in centres).
- Find out what your church is doing on a national or international level (mission trip, fundraising, collecting needed supplies).
- Support PWS&D and Presbyterians Sharing; [presbyterian.ca](http://presbyterian.ca).
- Attend the Canada Youth 2009 conference Mission Branch ([www.canadayouth.ca](http://www.canadayouth.ca))





# PWS Developments

The quarterly newsletter for  
Presbyterian World Service & Development

September 2008 edition

*PWS&D is the development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada*

## Farming for the Family in Malawi

For resource-poor farmers in Northern Malawi, growing enough food to support a family is an ongoing challenge. Presbyterian World Service & Development is working with the Soils, Foods and Healthy Communities project to improve the health, food security and soil fertility of approximately 2,000 households in the region.

Mercy joined the project in 2000 because her four children were extremely malnourished. She heard that incorporating different legumes into her children's diets would significantly improve their health so she decided to join the program. Shortly after, her husband passed away. As a single, 35-year-old mother, she was very worried about being able to afford agricultural supplies like fertilizer to keep her crops healthy and provide enough food for her children.

The Soils, Foods and Healthy Communities project helped Mercy

learn organic farming techniques to reduce her need for fertilizers. Along with teaching about proper nutrition, the new methods, where farmers receive guidance on how to test farming practices on their own, have dramatically improved the soil on her fields and she now grows enough food to last her family throughout the year. Her children enjoy the legumes and look forward to eating soy and peanut porridge in the mornings. Mercy says that her children are stronger now and that she no longer worries about their nutrition.

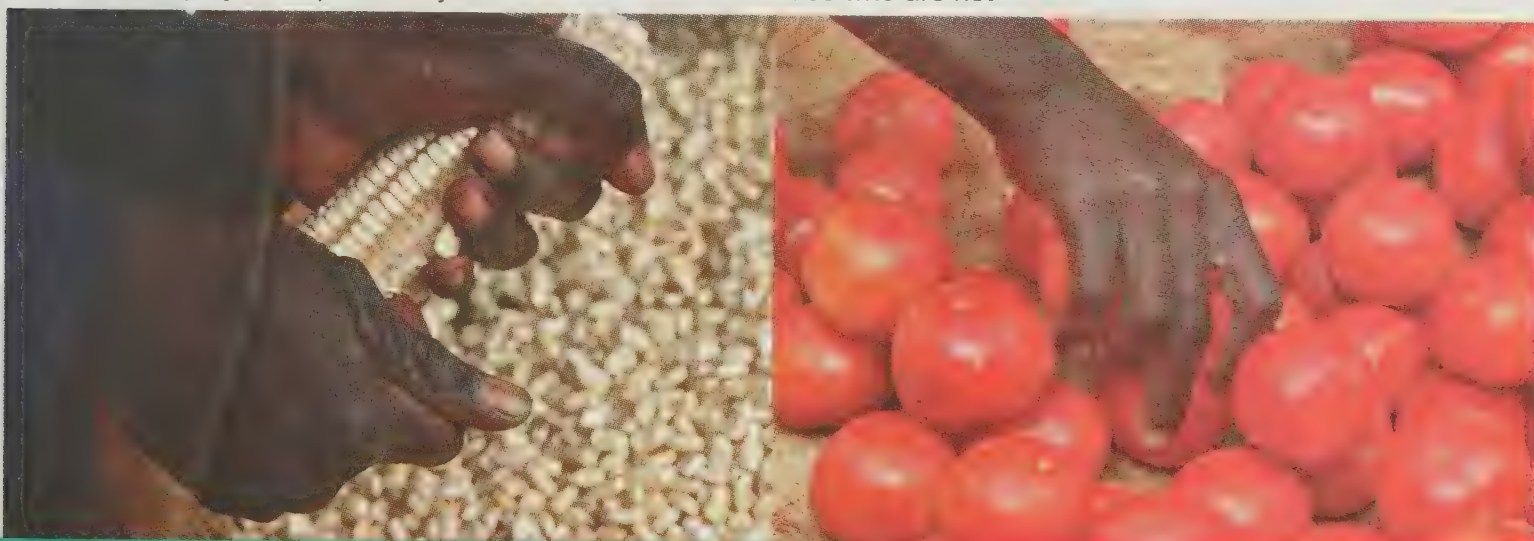
Mercy's fields are thriving and she has been able to multiply the amount of seed she has, enabling her to share with friends and families who are not



*Mercy and her two daughters proudly display their healthy crops*

as well off. She has produced a surplus of soy and peanuts, which she sells at the market to help pay for basic household necessities such as soap, salt, cooking oil, and to pay for her children's school fees.

Mercy and her children are hopeful for the future and they look forward to learning more about sustainable agriculture with other farmers in the community.





# Tsunami Response

## Conference Evaluates Lessons Learned

Triggered by a massive earthquake in the Indian Ocean on December 26, 2004, the resulting tsunamis inundated communities with waves over 30 metres high causing massive destruction and killing more than 225,000 people. Considered one of the deadliest natural disasters in history, the humanitarian response from people around the world was unprecedented.

From those first moments of shock and chaos, the journey to recovery for the hundreds of thousands of people affected by the catastrophic events has been a long and difficult one. PWS&D issued an appeal to congregations and immediately advanced funds to local partners and through the Action by Churches Together (ACT) International network.

Nearly \$100 million were spent by the ACT alliance to restore homes and livelihoods for some of the most affected people in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, and Thailand, where communities were hardest hit. Donations to PWS&D were matched by the Canadian government and together with three other denominations (United, Mennonite and Anglican) a \$6 million project in

Southern India was led by PWS&D, and made us the fourth largest contributor to the ACT appeal.

While the immediate crisis has ended, work has been ongoing to restore livelihoods, rebuild homes and help victims overcome from trauma.

In July, 2008, participants from India, Denmark, Finland, Norway, The Netherlands, Sweden, UK, USA and Canada came to Banda Aceh, Indonesia, to participate in a conference to evaluate lessons learned from the December 2004 tsunami.

Guy Smagghe, PWS&D Program Coordinator for Asia, attended the Tsunami Conference, representing four church houses in Canada.

While most aid agencies left the tsunami affected areas after the initial emergency response, PWS&D and its partners remained in the region, working to help people rebuild lives, learn new vocational skills, and open small businesses in the aftermath.

During the conference, participants

*Fishing boats in the bay*

were able to see successful enterprises including a small business selling fried bananas and a motorcycle washing business. In each case, the joy of the people at having overcome from the disaster to start up successful new operations was inspiring.

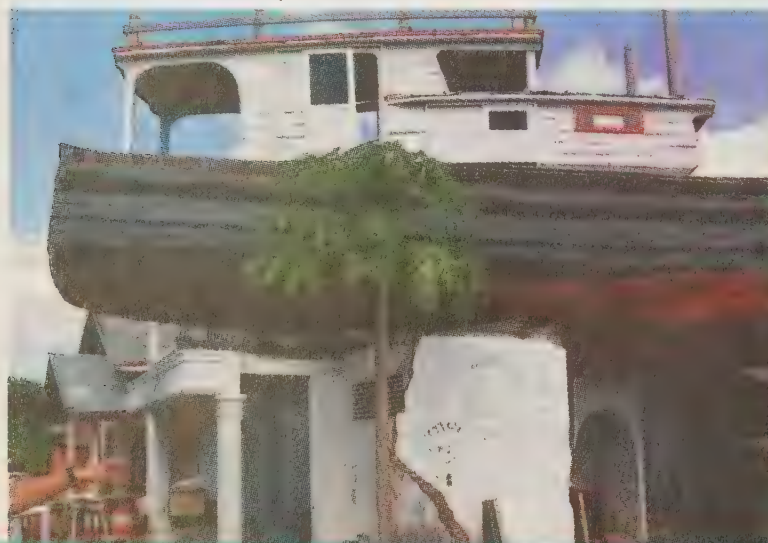
In many areas, monuments were erected as a reminder of the devastation and the enormous loss of life caused by the tsunami.

The tsunami conference helped bring together groups from around the world to share experiences and talk about both successes and challenges, in the hopes that if another emergency of this magnitude occurs again, international church agencies will be even better prepared to meet the needs of victims and provide the most timely and effective response.

*Additional information about PWS&D's tsunami response will be printed in upcoming editions.*

*Washed in the by the tsunami, a boat now permanently rests atop this home in Banda Aceh*

*A new home following reconstruction in Banda Aceh*





## Where Does PWS&D Work?

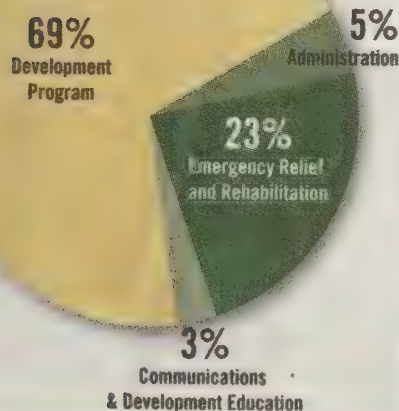


PWS&D has over 60 long-term development programs in 14 countries around the world. Our emergency relief efforts take place where the need is greatest.

In 2007, we worked in 23 countries to bring desperately needed aid and essential supplies after hurricanes, floods, conflict and food crises. PWS&D ensures timely and reliable response by working in partnership with other churches and organizations through the Action by Churches Together (ACT) network and Canadian Foodgrains Bank.



## How Was Your Money Spent?



PWS&D works hard to make sure your money is used as effectively and efficiently as possible. In 2007, 69% of all funds supported ongoing development projects, and 23% went to emergency relief in countries such as Pakistan, Colombia, Kenya and Zimbabwe.

To learn more about the work of PWS&D, request a copy of our **Annual Report** by calling 1-800-619-7301 ext. 291.





## Reaching Out in China and Myanmar

Canadian congregations responded overwhelmingly to PWS&D's appeals to help survivors of the May 12 earthquake in the province of Sichuan, China, and the May 2 cyclone in Myanmar (Burma). PWS&D responded through the Action by Churches Together network to bring victims desperately needed food and supplies, including rice, clean

water,  
plastic tarps  
and

temporary shelter.

Congregations in Canada rallied behind PWS&D's relief efforts and brought in an incredible \$123,252 for aid in Myanmar, and \$181,687 for China. As well, all donations made between May 12 - June 23 for relief efforts in China have been matched by the Canadian International Development Agency.

**Vancouver Chinese Presbyterian Church** in British Columbia went above and beyond, donating over \$50,000 from generous members of their congregation to relief efforts in China. The preschool class alone raised over \$24,000 selling cookies!



Vancouver Chinese Presbyterian Church children's group

**Myanmar (Burma) Emergency Relief**

The death toll continues to grow following the cyclone in Myanmar (Burma). Presbyterian Service & Development (PWS&D) is working with local churches through the Action by Churches Together network to bring victims desperately needed food and shelter materials.

**Praying for China: Relief efforts continue**

The emergency situation in China is ongoing following the massive 7.8 magnitude earthquake that struck the province of Sichuan on May 12, 2008. The death toll continues to rise and the need for relief items is desperate.

Please pray for the millions of people affected by the earthquake in Central China and help ensure basic necessities such as food, water, quilts and temporary shelter.

Earlier this year, West Shore Presbyterian Church held a fundraising campaign for a water project in Africa. One of the church members found an old hand pump from a well and turned it into a piggy bank. The children came forward every Sunday and dropped coins into the pump to raise money for a shallow well in Africa. When the children raised \$479, the coins were collected and a cheque was sent to PWS&D.

According to Rev. Harold McNabb, "The coins made quiet a racket as they were dropped into the old pump and heaven and earth, at least this part of it, know West Shore's children are at it again!"



Tell us about your congregation's fundraising efforts! Call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 243.

For more information or to make a donation, contact:



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PWS&D gratefully acknowledges all individuals and congregations who support the development and relief work of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.





# Good News

Evangelism is about faithfulness to God and bearing witness with our lives and words. BY CHARLES FENSHAM

How far back in the Bible do we need to go to find the idea of evangelism? Perhaps the first moment of evangelism in the Bible can be found in Genesis 3:9. There we find God calling out to the human, "Where are you?" God's search for us, like for the hiding humans in this story, does not always seem like good news! Yet, there is no better news than God the Creator seeking us out despite our destructive tendencies. Over the last two months we looked at some of the new insights that developed on the theme of mission in the 20th-century, particularly the idea that mission is in the first place God's activity, or The Mission of God—*Missio Dei*. Last month we looked at definitions of mission and learned how our mission joins God's mission of peace and justice as the church crosses frontiers in humility and service and looks for the new things God is doing. Mission is the church joining the reign of God that is coming to us in Jesus Christ. In joining God's reign, working in faith for peace

and justice, we establish signs of this good news for all to see. Thus, mission and evangelism are inseparable.

Evangelism simply means good news. If mission is about God's gracious reaching out to us, then evangelism is about sharing this good story with others. One of the saddest things in our present North American situation is that the word evangelism became associated with cheap talk, television hype or simple formulas that people are asked to pray. These contemporary religious expressions associated with evangelism have almost no bearing on its real meaning. A helpful way to understand the breach between contemporary popular ideas of evangelism and its real form is to look at what an unknown author in the second century wrote to Diognetus about Christians:

They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. They are in the flesh, but do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but are citizens of heaven.

If we live that way today, evangelism will be a natural byproduct of our congregations. The disciples are promised the power of the Holy Spirit to bear witness in Acts 1:8. In Matthew 28:16-20 the disciples are sent to make disciples and teach because all power in heaven and earth is given to Jesus Christ. In Mark 16 the disciples are told to tell the Good News to every creature (not just people!), and in John 20 the disciples are sent in the way God sent Jesus. In all these cases there is a close association between how the disciples act and live, and the verbal account they give of it. Evangelism is about this whole package, not just words, and specifically not words disembodied from a church community and extraordinary lives. Evangelism is about faithfulness to God and bearing witness with our lives and words. It is a habit of the life of those who are part of the church, not a technique to make converts, or get some new members for the church.

The word for witness in the New ➤





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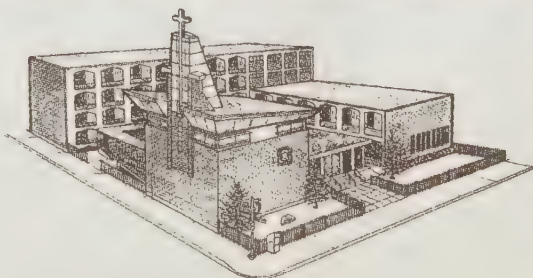
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## MISSION PART 3

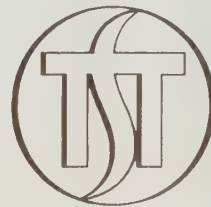
Testament is *martyria*, a word from which our word martyr originates. The association between witness and martyr is not accidental. Tertullian, an early Christian leader, said the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Where we join God's mission for world repair, God's reign already present, there we bear witness and the Good News is spread—something that often leads to suffering among those who do so.

This process is fundamentally associated with hope not optimism. Such inexplicable hope is the spirit of mission and the substance of evangelism. Such hope finds its strength in the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God who continues to call all humankind in the agony of the loving Creator, "Where are you?" ■

*Rev. Dr. Charles Fensham is professor of systemic theology at Knox College, Toronto. This is the last article of a series.*

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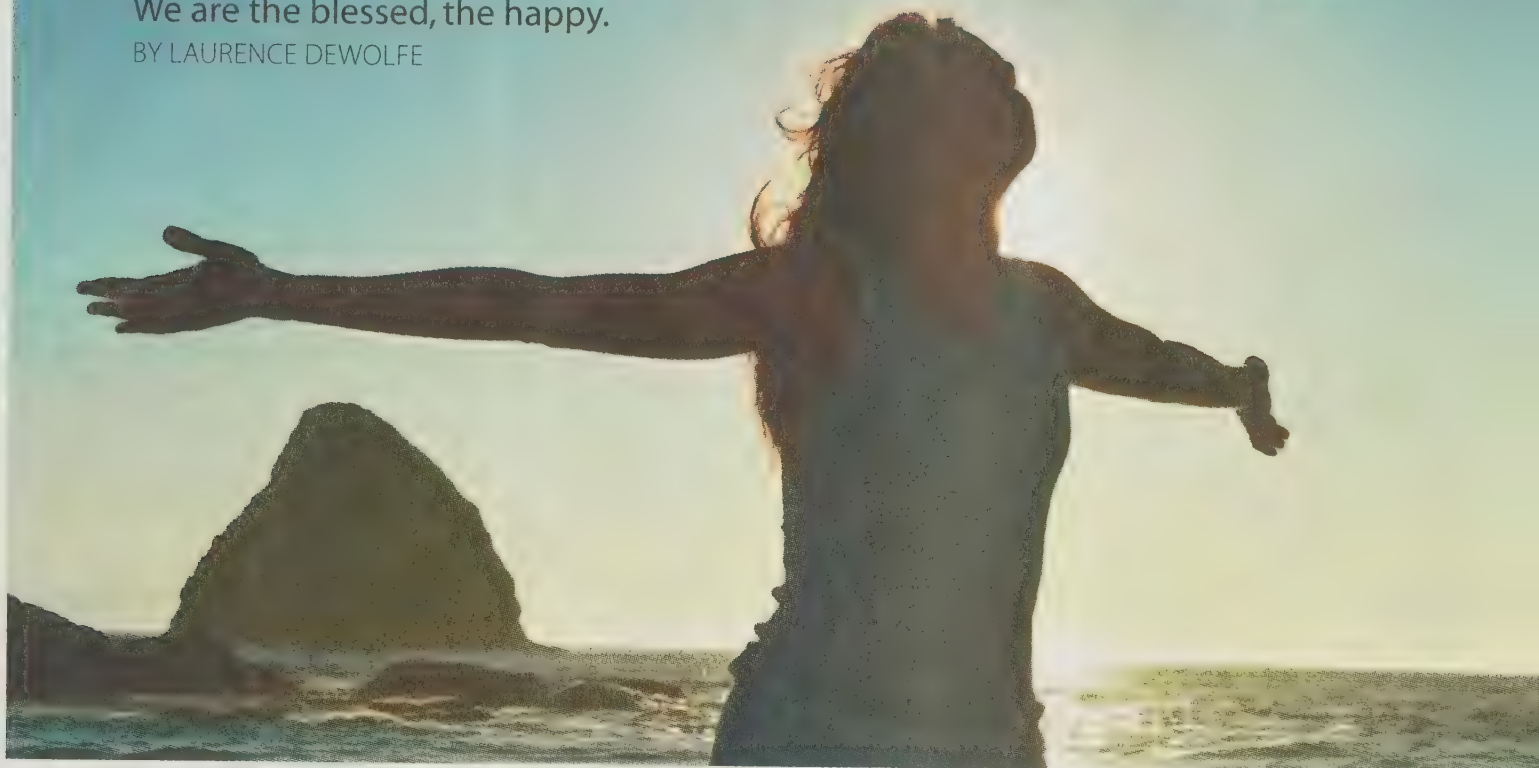
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# A Crazy Gracious God

We are the blessed, the happy.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE



September 21, 2008:

Exodus 16:2-15

Matthew 20:1-16

**M**y father gave the CNR 34 years. So many men were hired in 1943, 20 years passed before he could count on steady work. We never wanted for anything. But we were by no means rich. I remember the day my father told me, with pride, what he had earned in the last full year he worked before retirement.

A few years later I graduated to an income package worth twice as much as my father made in his 34th year of employment. Did I deserve it? I sure thought so. I look back now; just a little older than my father was when I was born. I wonder why I've been so lucky.

Or, in Christian vocabulary, it's a

wonder I'm so graced.

My parents sacrificed so my sisters and I could have the lives we wanted. They continued to give, long after we really needed their help. That was who they were. I know I'm no more graced than they were. But I'm not nearly as gracious.

We are who we are by grace. If we can't accept that, Jesus says we're far from the kingdom of heaven.

We ask this parable of the kingdom, from Matthew, tough questions. We complain of injustice. It doesn't make sense. It doesn't fit the way we know the world works. Or maybe it does, but it shouldn't.

If this farmer stands for God, as the one with power on the story sometimes does, God is neither just nor fair. Robert Capon (*The Parables of Judg-*

*ment*) has studied the parables of Jesus backward and forward. He says God is like the farmer in the parable in one respect: Crazy, but not stupid.

God is a willing fool for love. When we accept that, we're close to the kingdom. It's also a sign of our maturity as Christians.

Sometimes preachers tell us we're the complainers in the parable. God is as good as God alone can be. We complain about God's goodness, as human beings always do.

Remember the Exodus reading as well. After all God has done for the Israelites, what do they do?

They complain. They nearly drive poor Moses mad! God gives them food, just as much as they need. They don't like it! But isn't getting more—and more than our neighbours— ➤



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## PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

what life is all about?

So the parable speaks judgment on our constant drive for more, our obsession with measurement.

We're always counting our blessings, and when we finish the count we find room for one more.

Yes, there's judgment in the parable. But, where's the grace?

How about this? Sure, we can be as bothersome to God as the manna-eaters in the desert, or the day-labourers with their thin pay envelopes. But we're most like the people who worked just one hour.

We're latecomers to the circle of disciples. Yet we're embraced by the same love, gifted by the same Spirit, entrusted with the same mission as every Christian who has gone before us. We live by the same grace they lived by. All they did in response to that grace is foundation for us. We

draw water from deep wells we didn't lift a finger or break a sweat to dig.

Today, we're the last who are first in God's realm. Those who lived before us are well-satisfied with that scheme of things. It doesn't work in our world. But it's at the foundation of God's reign.

The last to enter the banquet are first at the table. The newcomer comes, the diners move to clear the seat of honour.

Do we realize how lucky we are? How abundantly, amazingly graced we are? We are the last to come who are first at the feast.

Tomorrow, in the next generation, others will be first, though they follow us. Today, now, we are the blessed, the happy, the favoured children of our crazy-gracious God. ■

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe lives in Halifax.*

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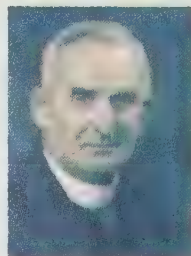
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I've always wanted to write something that would last forever, so I signed a mortgage. We were told that building a house would not only sink our bank account, it would stifle our marriage. But one of the reasons both are still intact is that Ramona has never been one to ask for the moon. In fact, as it turned out, I was usually the one saying, "Honey, let's put a marble staircase here," and she would say, "Phil, have you looked at our chequing account lately? We can't even afford marbles."

One of the small victories she allowed me was the placing of a glass French door in the pantry. This, I reasoned, would not only look attractive when the bank manager showed up to repossess the house, it would give us the jump on children who like to hide in the pantry and scare us to death late at night.

I was glad for that French door.

Until last week. I got home from some chores, feeling good about myself. And then I saw Ramona, standing in the kitchen wearing a strained expression, as if a toothache were driving her to extraction.

"What happened?" I asked, kicking off my shiny black shoes.

"Why don't you sit down, Phil? I'll get some extra strength Tylenol."

"What happened?"

"It was an accident."

"What was an accident?"

"The pantry door."

There are times in life when I can still move quickly. The pantry door had a jagged hole in the glass about the size of a little boy's Reebok.

"What happened?" I asked, my face wide-eyed and wrinkled.

"Well...he was doing dishes with his brother and he got mad. I guess

# Keep Things Right

You never know what a day will bring, so be thankful.

BY PHIL CALLAWAY



he tried out a karate move he'd seen on TV. Go easy on him, Phil. He couldn't believe he did it. He's been pacing around in a panic ever since. In fact, he just went to sleep a few minutes ago. You should have heard his prayer: 'Dear God, help Daddy not to kill me.'"

I sat at the kitchen table then, staring out the window and pondering the events of the last 24 hours. That morning I'd been sitting at my computer when the phone rang. A friend was calling to tell me that an acquaintance of ours had died in the night of a brain aneurism. He was my age. He left behind a beautiful wife

and daughter.

"Dear God," I prayed. "I don't know what a day will bring. I don't know how long I'm here for. But thanks for this little reminder to keep things right with those I love."

I descended our plywood staircase, and prayed over our sleeping kids as I do almost every night. "The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace. Amen." ■

*Phil Callaway is the author of Growing Up on the Edge of the World available at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com)*



# Medicare Under Attack

There are forces of darkness working against our shared destiny. BY JACK BOAN

Canada faces a shocking threat to Medicare's existence and Canada's traditional way of life. The battle is being waged by a mindset featuring an evil ideology, highly organized and supported by big money. On the other side are millions of disorganized citizens who, for the most part, are oblivious to the danger facing them in the joust.

Dr. Roy Romanow, author of the Royal Commission report, *Building on Values: The Future of Health Care in Canada*, spoke eloquently about this danger at a conference in Regina in 2007: "Through the years, as we lived together, worked together, and built together, [we developed a] notion of shared destiny [which] was transformed into the foundation of a nation. Generation after generation of Canadians have seized on the cornerstone idea that our future and our society is frequently best shaped through community action—that the sum of Canada is often greater than its remarkably diverse parts. This, then, is our nation's narrative and it resides in our collective DNA. In recent years, however, the soil has been tilled for the sprouting of views at odds with shared destiny. Today, we witness a palpable momentum toward individualism, decentralization, and privatization."

John Ralston Saul, in his 1995 Massey Lectures, called it corporatism.

The philosophy of the corporate

boardroom has subtly been absorbed wholesale. Terms like the bottom line, stakeholder, and client (instead of patient) are commonplace. Harmless? Probably! But what is not harmless is that the motivator in the workplace, which used to be one of cooperation and pride of workmanship, seems to have been replaced by fear and distrust.

Attempting to counter this movement is an excellent little book—*A Healthcare Covenant*—which is well-written and carefully thought-out, published by Ecumenical Health Care Network and the Canadian Council of Churches ([www.ccc-cce.ca](http://www.ccc-cce.ca)).

**The philosophy of the corporate boardroom has subtly been absorbed wholesale. Terms like the bottom line, stakeholder, and client (instead of patient) are commonplace**

It begins with an excellent foreword by health-care expert Dr. Nuala Kenney of the Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University. Next, Karen MacKay-Llewellyn explains why Christians, particularly, should be concerned about the provision of health care. A brief but outstanding history of the role of the church in health care is provided by Joe Gunn. This careful study reveals that the church has been active in influencing health-care legislation since the 17th century.

The whole of the submission to the Kirby (Senate) Committee presented in 2001 by Stephen Allen, associate secretary of justice ministries for The Presbyterian Church in Canada, is full of good ideas and is reproduced in full. Likewise the plea for a health care covenant, presented to the Romanow Commission in 2002. Taken together, they acquaint us with the issues and the thinking of the EHCN, and focus the reader on current and ongoing problems. Incidentally, that recommendation about a covenant, in substance, appears in the Romanow Report as the first of its 47 recommendations.

My old friend Janet Somerville, former general secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches, convincingly informs us on "Why Christians Should Stay Involved in Canada's Health Care Debate."

Finally, some 30 pages of fact sheets provide essential information for possible study groups. Why a health covenant should be adopted by Parliament is thoroughly aired; the issues surrounding home care are discussed; the merits of a national health council are presented; the problem of wait times is analyzed; for-profit health care is shown to be a far cry from a solution; and issues surrounding home care, health-care funding, and prescription drugs are discussed in sufficient detail to be useful in study group discussions. The book concludes with a postscript by Rev. Dr. Kenneth Bellous. Two





most useful appendices are included, pointing the reader to essential facts that may not be generally known.

The EHCN is alive to the dangers lurking in the shadows, and has put out this book in order to galvanize the Christian community to action. The fact is, there are powers of darkness working sometimes quietly, sometimes overtly, to destroy Medicare. These are forces which have bought into the ideology that the market should be called upon to make

decisions as far as our health care goes. These misguided forces are responsible for putting out unsubstantiated views like "Medicare is unsustainable" and must be supplemented by private insurance and private, for-profit agencies to deliver health care. They harp, for instance, on waiting times, claiming that for-profit agencies would make wait times go away. The question is, how do we fight back? One way would be to create EHCN chapters in every community to put political

pressure on their legislative and parliamentary representatives. Unless the grassroots make its preferences known, how are the lawmakers supposed to know that our single-payer health-care system is preferred to any alternative available? This book provides an excellent starting place for study. ■

*Jack Boan is professor emeritus at the University of Regina and a highly sought-after expert on health-care issues.*

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# God Called Him

John Calvin gave his heart 'promptly and sincerely.' BY PETER BUSH

Canadian Presbyterians name churches after John Calvin and claim to be his theological descendants, so it is worth asking: Who was John Calvin?

He was born in Noyon, Picardy, northwest of Paris, on July 10, 1509, the youngest of five (or maybe seven) children. (And at the start of Calvin's story we confront the problem that makes telling his story challenging. Many things about Calvin we do not know, in part because of the 500 years between his time and ours, but more significantly despite being a prolific writer Calvin wrote little about his own life.) His father was the financial administrator for the cathedral chapter of Noyon; his mother, a pious woman, died when Calvin was four or five years old. Recognizing the boy's academic ability his father enrolled him in the University of Paris when he was 14 years old (at the time the normal age to start university) anticipating Calvin becoming a priest. Calvin started his university education just as Martin Luther's writings were creating waves within the church. Calvin would have been aware of the debate between reformers and anti-reformers which led at times to the advocates of reform being burned at the stake.

In 1528 Calvin's father had a falling out with his employers which culminated in his excommunication, and he decided Calvin should become a lawyer. So Calvin moved to Orleans and later Bourges to study. But Calvin, now in his 20s, remained engaged by the theological debate. Nearly 40 years later, he described his transformation into a reformer as a gradual process. We know little about this process except that Calvin was publicly aligned with the reformers by the end of 1533.

On All Saint's Day, 1533, Nicholas

Cop, a friend of Calvin's and the rector of the University of Paris, gave the address at the opening of the academic year. In it Cop made clear his reform sympathies. Scholars debate what role Calvin played in drafting Cop's speech, some arguing he was the author. The ire the speech caused forced Calvin to lay low under the protection of Louis du Tillet, canon at the cathedral of Angouleme. Calvin also read voraciously from du Tillet's well-stocked library, including some early theological writings. Calvin, together with most reformers, believed the church needed

**Calvin started university just as Martin Luther was creating waves within the church. Calvin would have been aware of the debate**

to return to its original commitments and patterns, so they turned to the writings of leaders from the church's first five centuries for insights into the renewal of the church.

By the end of 1534, it was clear France was too dangerous for high profile reformers and in January 1535 du Tillet, Cop and Calvin all found their way to Basle, Switzerland, a city which welcomed reformers fleeing persecution. In exile and within the stimulating theological environment of Basle, Calvin wrote the first edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in less than eight months. Published in March 1536, when Calvin was 27 year old, the *Institutes* are a skillful mixture of biblical material, early church writings (often quoted from memory given Calvin's limited access to theological resources), and theological reflections from the first generation of reformers. Calvin was to spend the rest of his life revising and expanding the *Institutes*; the 1559 edition was five times lon-

ger than the first edition. The 1536 edition opened with a letter to the king of France defending the reform movement and appealing for religious freedom in France so the exiles could return. The *Institutes* was an instant best seller.

Calvin passed through Geneva later in 1536, visiting Guillaume Farel, a pastor who was leading the reform of Genevan church life, along with the city council. Farel compelled Calvin to stay in Geneva to help bring order and stability to the reforms. At first his only task in Geneva was to lecture on the Bible during mid-week gatherings of the church community. Gradually Calvin grew more comfortable in functioning as a parish minister. But he had much to learn about the pastoral role. As a result of his and Farel's unwillingness to bend on church worship and congregational life matters such as the frequency of communion (Calvin wanted it at least monthly), the Geneva city council removed Farel and Calvin as ministers in 1538 and asked them to leave the city.

Calvin went to Strasbourg where he ministered to French-speaking refugees fleeing the religious persecution. In Strasbourg, Calvin met and married Idelette de Bure, a widow with two children. The marriage was a loving one as is evident from Calvin's letters to friends. Calvin and Idelette had a son, Jacques, who did not survive infancy. On the death of his son, Calvin wrote, "Certainly the Lord has afflicted us with a deep and painful wound in the death of our beloved son." Idelette's health declined through the late 1540's, a source of concern to Calvin. Following her death on March 29, 1549, Calvin wrote, "I am trying as much as possible not to be completely overwhelmed by grief."

In 1541 after three productive years as a parish minister in Strasbourg, Calvin



received an invitation to return to Geneva. Given his previous experiences in the city, he was reticent, but hearing the call of God in the invitation he returned. For the next 23 years he poured himself into the life of Geneva as he sought to reform its religious life. Calvin died on May 27, 1564, and at his own request was buried in an unmarked grave, the site of which is still unknown.

Many of the changes in Calvin's life took place as the result of situations beyond his control. In those changing circumstances he trusted in the providence of God, even when that was hard to see. God had called him, and in response Calvin responded, "My heart, Lord, I give you, promptly and sincerely." ■

*Rev. Peter Bush is the teaching elder at Westwood, Winnipeg. This is the first of 10 articles prepared by the Committee on History.*

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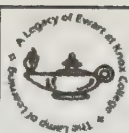
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# A Long Process

It is time to participate in bringing peace to the world.

BY REV. CHEOL SOON PARK

Throughout my Moderator year, I'd like to encourage and challenge you with two topics—to change, and to heal and reconcile. I talked about the first one in last month issue and now I'd like to share with you about the second topic—to heal and reconcile.

As we live in this wonderful country, we often forget how blessed we are. Very few countries in the world have not experienced war on their own soil and Canada is one of those blessed few. Of course, there was a war between Canada and our neighbor in the south but it was not a war that tore the nation into pieces and left a permanent scar to the national identity. And there were many other wars that Canadians fought and lost lives for but we didn't have a war on our own soil. Yet at this very moment, there are wars going on in many regions of the world. Each of these conflicts has its own reason and purpose. We have some of our beloved sons and daughters dispatched to the regions to restore the peace and harmony. Our prayers go out with them and their family members in Canada.

War and conflicts leave permanent scars on people's hearts, which mutates our conscience and freezes the judgment. It destroys the likeness of God in us. Its gloomy shadow lingers generations even after conflicts are over. Wars may end, but real fight begins as the process of reconciliation starts. There is a misunderstanding,

disguised justice, inevitable hatred and division, and the absence of love and compassion for others, not to mention the politics that makes the situation worse. These deadly and complicated elements stay behind and destroy the community like a fatal disease.

We are living in a time of the most advanced thoughts and ideals. Yet we are experiencing the conflict and clashing in more complicated form. There are so many conflicts that I cannot list them all in this page but I am compelled to mention two—Afghanistan and Korean peninsula. We all know about the war in Afghanistan. It seems endless and so chaotic that some people say God has abandoned Afghanistan. Canada is giving out so much to defend the freedom and restore the security in the region and eventually bring harmony and peace to the global community.

Also there is a full-scale war in Korean peninsula. The Korean War never ended, two Koreas only agreed to cease fire in 1953. Technically they are having a break to fight again. During the last 55 years both Koreas built up not only huge amount of weapons and ammunitions but also extreme level of hospitality and hatred. More than two million soldiers are positioned to fight each other. No one wants a war again but the situation is so tense that you can feel the pressure in the air. There are more than a million Koreans whose family members were separated



and have not met since the war. Korea has been separated into two because of ideology.

We do not enjoy talking about wars. Yet this is the reality that we Christians have to deal with. I'd like to ask you to pray for the people in the regions with conflicts. Pray for the leaders. Pray for the peace and harmony in the region. Also I'd like to ask you to look for an opportunity to learn more about these conflicts and contribute to the peaceful resolution as mature and responsive Christians. Peace doesn't fall from the sky; it is rather made through a painstakingly long process. God is calling his people to participate in the process and contribute to the resolution. Ten years of hard work can be easily wiped out by three days of war. We cannot allow any more war in the world and we have to focus our effort on healing and reconciliation. God brings peace to his people but he always does this through his people. It is time to participate. ■

*Rev. Cheol Soon Park*



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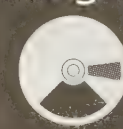
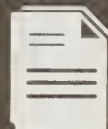
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Victoria, St. Andrew's; Full-time assistant minister, three-year call; Convener Search Committee Colina Titus, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 680 Courtenay St., Victoria, BC V8W 1C1; 250-384-5734; colina.titus@gmail.com.

# Obituaries

**BROWN**, Lloyd, aged 87 and a long-time member and elder of First, Chatham, Ont.

**CARMICHAEL**, Kenneth Duncan Hudspith, born in Verdun, Que. June 24, 1910, and died in Pointe-Claire, Que. on March 11, 2008. He was the dearly beloved husband of the late Anne Currie Macdonald Carmichael; cherished father of Moira Anne Hayes (Rev. Stephen A.) of Quebec City, Que., and Kenneth Macdonald Carmichael (Lynn) of Ottawa, Ont.; dearly loved grandfather of Catherine Hayes Jackson (Rod) and Jonathan Hayes (Jane), and proud great-grandfather of Charlotte Hayes.

A life-long member of the Presbyterian Church, he was ordained an elder in First, Verdun, in 1936 and served as such in Moosejaw, Sask., Vernon and Nelson, B.C., St. Giles, Ottawa, and St. Columba-by-the-Lake, Pointe-Claire. The service of witness to the resurrection and thanksgiving for

his life was conducted by Rev. Ian D. Fraser, minister of St. Columba-by-the-Lake.

**MACPHERSON**, Flora. A service of celebration was held in remembrance at St. Andrew's, Cardigan, P.E.I., on April 8, 2008. She would be remembered by several women who were students at the Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training School in Toronto during the 1950s and 1960s. There were two residences: one on St. George Street and the other on Prince Arthur Street.

Flora was employed as housekeeper. Because of the family-style nature of the houses, there was a considerable amount of mingling of students and staff in hallways, stairways, dining hall and so forth, and Flora became well-known to the residents. She referred to the students as "the girls." She was by nature fun-loving, supportive and hardworking. Flora eventually moved to a new job in the WMS offices where she had bookkeeping responsibilities and other office work in connection with the "Glad Tidings."

Following her retirement, she returned to her home province, Prince Edward Island, where her sister, Catherine Smith (Kay) resides. In Flora's very late years and because of diminishing health she moved to a full-time care facility where she died just 10 days prior to her 92nd birthday. A tribute was prepared by her cousin Roberta (Shaw) Pocklington and was read at the service by another cousin, Adele Webster. In it, Flora was described as a person with deep faith who lived it fully; who was kind and gentle, blessed with a great sense of humour and a contagious laugh. Although Flora was a quiet person, she is one who will be well-remembered by her family and friends.

**SAMS**, Major Reverend Peter Lyle, C.D. B.A., died on May 12, 2008, at Almonte, Ont. He graduated from Knox College and was ordained in 1953 in Timmins, Ont. Assistant to Dr. Ian Burnett at St. Andrew's, Ottawa, Ont. Asked by Col. F. Goforth to be a chaplain, Lyle served in Shilo, Egypt, Kingston, Petawawa, Valcartier, Chatham, N.B. and London, Ont. Retiring from the military in 1979, Lyle was then called



to St. Andrew's, Quebec, where he ministered for over 11 years.

He is greatly missed by his wife Margaret and his family: Findlay, Andrew, May, Katharine, Matthew and four grandchildren. A memorial service was held at Almonte Presbyterian, conducted by General Rev. David Kettle, Rev. Dr. Stephen Hayes and Rev. James Ferrier.

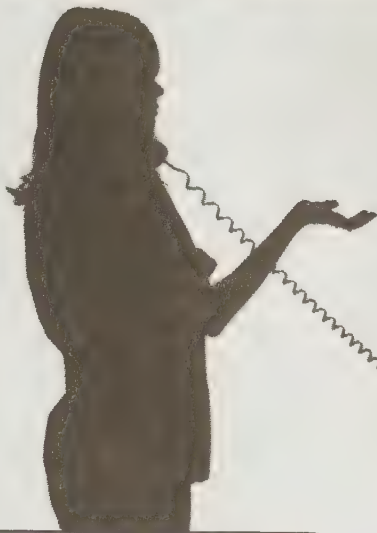
**SMITH,** Rev. Howard Donald, of Morrisburg, Ont., aged 84, died peacefully, surrounded by his loving family, following a courageous battle with cancer on May 28, 2008, at the Winchester District Memorial Hospital, Winchester, Ont.

Howard was born and raised in Toronto. He served in the Air Force from 1943-45. He entered teachers' college and after graduation taught school in Port Dover, Ont., and Toronto from 1946-50. He then changed career paths as he felt the call of God to the ministry. He studied at Toronto Bible College, the University of Waterloo and Knox College and was ordained to the ministry in the Presbyterian Church on May 28, 1958. He ministered to congregations in Jarvis, Ont., Burlington, Ont., Ormstown, Que., Norval, Ont., Winchester, Ont. and Timmins, Ont. Howard passed away on the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the ministry.

Howard is survived by his wife Isabel of 51 years and children Stephen of Barrie, Ont., Paul (Susan) of Winchester, Ont., Susan (Neil) Kittle of Winchester and Mark of Vancouver, B.C., as well as five cherished granddaughters: Melissa, Megan, Dana, Leah Ann and Julia. He was predeceased by his son Peter in 1974.

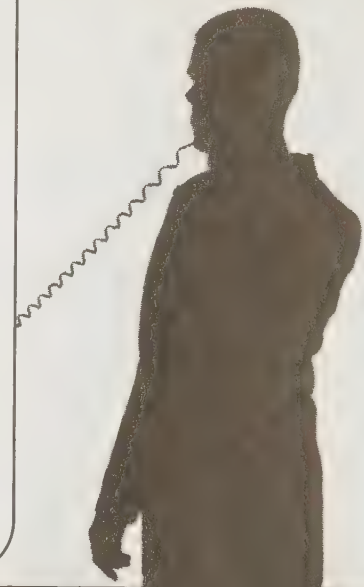
Howard was a man who walked the talk when it came to living the Christian life. He was a pastor who lived what he preached and his life was fully dedicated to the Lord. He touched many lives for the Lord and will long be remembered for his humble and gentle spirit, his warm and tender heart and his dedication to God, his family and the people he served. ■

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**Phil. 4:13, NIV.**

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was observing appeared to be a rite of incantations, and of deep superstition. And it was all woven into what looked to me like a kind of religion.

Linda, Chelsea and I had been hanging out behind the bucking chutes at the Roe Lake Rodeo all afternoon. Rodeo is in our blood and we love going, not so much for the animal action but to connect with all the cowboy types. They are wonderful folks, people of our roots, a down-to-earth group. Bull riders are a little different from all the other people who live under the shade of a Stetson. In my experience, religion woven together with superstition plays large in the lives of quite a few bull riders, at least in the part that embraces the rodeo event.

As we drove out of the rodeo grounds late in the afternoon, my mind was pondering the way religion and superstition so often get woven together. As we trucked home to the murmur of Ian Tyson's *Cowboyography* on the CD player, my mind shifted from considering the bull rider to my own practice. Upon honest reflection, I realized that in many ways I was a lot like the bull rider. Superstition seems to leak into my life too, often getting mingled with my faith.

Webster's dictionary defines superstition as "a belief or practice resulting from ignorance, fear of the unknown, trust in magic or chance, or a false conception of causation." Superstition attributes spiritual or even magical powers to human action; stuff that I do or don't do, things I say or don't say, even what I think or don't think. It includes everything from countering bad luck by throwing salt over my left shoulder if I spill some, to believing in the special power of certain words uttered in a special way, often with good religious intent as in some ritualistic prayers perhaps.

As we motored towards home, and as I reflected on how I had often woven superstition into the fabric of my faith, I came to the stark realization that there is absolutely no room for superstition in the Christian faith. Superstition is

what I do to try and magically control how things happen. Faith is a leaving of things completely to God to control how things happen. Like religious legalism, fear and a craving for some kind of human security often drive my superstitions. To quote Helen Keller: "Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."

Hmmm! It would seem that me and the bull rider need to break the superstition cycle and get on with enjoying the ride, or in Keller's words, the adventure. And superstition is really an ever-deepening enslaving cycle. I think that was the Apostle Paul's point when he was teaching the Colossians about superstition and speaking against the false apostles that were promoting superstition as kind of add-on to Christian faith. Paul wrote: "If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" (Col. 2:20-21) Commenting on these verses John Calvin wrote: "(Paul) most admirably describes the progress of false apostles. The way in which superstition begins is this: they forbid not only to eat, but even to chew gently; after they have obtained this, they forbid even to taste. This also being yielded to them, they deem it unlawful to touch even with the finger."

A day at the rodeo watching bull riders and bulls ended up teaching me a deep spiritual principle. Like religious legalism, not only is superstition a dangerous, seductive and captivating cycle that is in opposition to a liberating Christian faith, it ends up rendering one captive to the bull.

End note: At the end of this particular day the score was bulls 10, bull riders 0. ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry.*



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# Captive to the Bull

Faith is about leaving things completely to God. BY DAVID WEBBER

The young cowboy looked like death warmed over. His face was pale, his eyes sunken into black holes, his walk revealing constant pain and his facial expression locked somewhere between terror and dread. That's not what made him stand out though. Lots of rodeo cowboys look just like that, particularly before getting on their ride. What made this guy stand out were his superstitious incantations, which made him a bull rider.

Most bull riders go through a series of incantations in word and deed, prior to sitting down onto their bull for their eight-second ride through hell. They usually show up early, which seems to me odd because the bull riding is always the last event of any rodeo. This fella began by putting his riggin' bag at a particular spot against the chute fence. He then emptied it and placed each item in meticulous order. First came his boots, followed by his spurs, chaps, leather gloves and his bull rope. Next he

fussed with spacing each item just the right distance apart as he placed them on the ground. When he had everything just right he began to pace back and forth covering the whole width of the area behind the chutes. His pacing was slow and methodical, almost like he was counting each step. Each time he paced past his bucking riggin' he would adjust each item on the ground again, presumably to make sure it was in just the right spot. Then he would mutter a few words, cross himself and continue the procedure. This went on for at least a couple of hours, through the other rodeo events which he seemed to ignore.

After the last go-round of calf roping, the bull rider stopped his pacing and began to put on each item of his gear. Again, the order was meticulous and methodical. First came boots, then the spurs, the gaudy coloured rodeo chaps and then the leather riding gloves. Next came the rosining of the bull rope and

working it in with the riding glove, which was accomplished with the meticulous care of a concert violinist tending to his bow. And then a series of simulated rides, one hand grabbing the imaginary bull rope, the other, the balance hand, lifted high in rodeo rider fashion. Each simulated bull jump was accomplished in a kind of slow motion dance that looked like it was choreographed by a cross between Michael Jackson and a tai chi master. About that time, the bull was run into the chutes to be rigged for the ride. Certain words were said, the man crossed himself again and began dressing the bull for the show.

I thought all this strange until I realized that most of the other bull riders were doing very similar things. Not one of them spoke to the other; each was in his own head. However, it became clear that there was much more than mental preparation going on. What I

continued on page 49





Sara



Wilf



Bill



Linda Moore

Every Thursday morning, residents of Portland Place go grocery shopping. Portland Place Non-Profit Housing is a Presbyterian mission in downtown Toronto operating since 1991. It provides 46 units to men, women and families suffering from various challenges that makes finding and keeping housing elsewhere extremely difficult. Life skills are taught, community is developed, and tenants receive the care they need to stabilize their lives. Pictured are staff member Linda Moore, and clients Sara, Bill and Wilf. To learn more, call 416-703-0652.



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OCTOBER 2008

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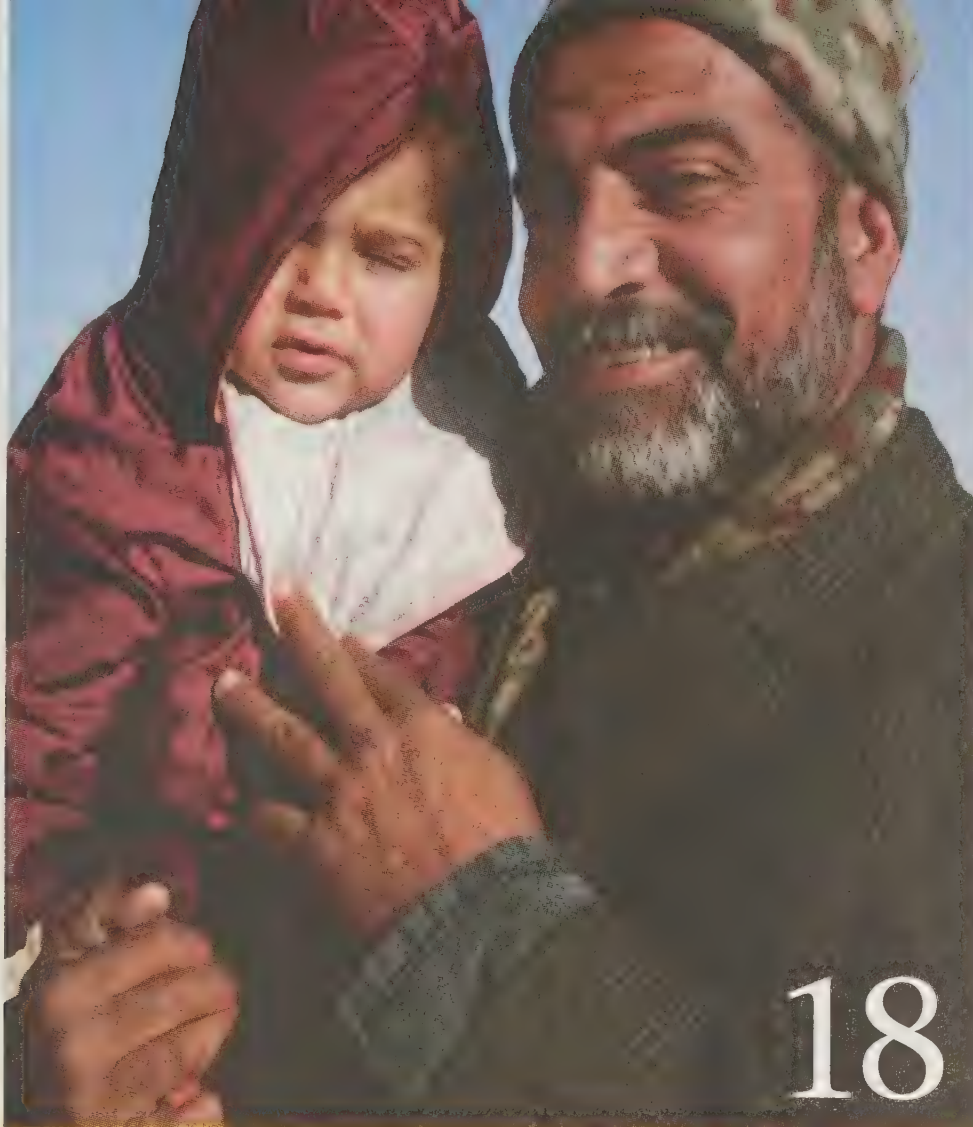




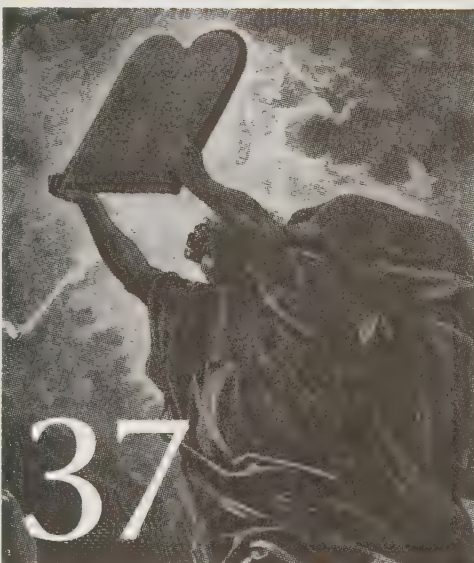


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## IRAQI REFUGEES



### On the Cover

Courtesy of the United Nations High  
Commission for Refugees (Syria)





# THE HUMANITARIAN HEART

The world is changed by loving one person  
at a time. Just one. BY ELIZABETH MCWEENY

The idea of the shrinking “humanitarian space” for refugees is a common theme in international discussions about refugee issues. I prefer to call the condition our shrinking humanitarian heart. Like other heart diseases it sneaks up on us without notice until one day it hits us hard. Our humanitarian heart has been in a sad condition for a while, but after Sept. 11, 2001, we got a real picture of its shrinkage.

Humanitarian space refers to the symbolic amount of room we have for people in need. It is influenced by the laws and practices of states that provide a safe place to rebuild lives for those who have fled persecution, war, human rights abuses and natural disasters. Compassionate, humanitarian hearts beat in people who encourage their governments to provide safe havens. Canada has long been recognized for its generosity towards refugees and Canadians like to think we are good at welcoming the stranger. The reality is somewhat different.

Terrorist attacks and subsequent rhetoric that often equate refugees with terrorists have provided the perfect backdrop for growing xenophobia and racism. Fear mongering has incited governments, including Canada, to reinforce borders and limit civil liberties in the name of security. In Fortress Europe, boats are turned back onto the high seas to capsize their human cargo. At airports abroad, Canadian personnel refuse entry to people seeking refuge in Canada. We are building perimeter fences around compassionate responses to our brothers and sisters who are living and dying in fear and pain.

Two million have fled Iraq, millions are suffering unspeakable horror in Darfur, a million more Afghan refugees languish in insecurity and poverty in Pakistan and Iran. The list goes on. But let's remember Mother Teresa spoke about how we can change lives one person at a time. She was right.

Canada has an agreement with the United States that allows us to refuse entry to people coming via the States to seek protection as refugees in Canada. Every day desperate, frightened families are turned back at our Canada-U.S. border crossings. The American authorities pick them up and many



are put in detention. Not only is this against our international agreements on refugee protection, it also places women, children and men in real danger of being returned from the States to torture and persecution in the countries from which they have fled. Can we really allow Canada to support the United States in this rendition?

War has a nasty habit of fragmenting families. Most of us have trouble imagining what it must be like to run for your life. I cannot conceive of any reason for leaving my children behind. But I know mothers and fathers

who have been forced to do just that. The pain on their faces reflects the agony they wake up to everyday that they are separated from their children. Canada takes many months to process the applications for these children. Sometimes, through no fault of their own, the children are refused by Canada and can never be reunited with their parents. Some die waiting. Surely, we can change this situation by demanding a humanitarian response from our government and refusing to allow bureaucratic red tape to excuse us? Reuniting children with their parents who are separated by war and terror is changing lives one family at a time.

Presbyterians are changing the lives of refugees through the private sponsorship program with Presbyterian World Service & Development, and also by supporting the advocacy work of the Canadian Council for Refugees. We may never be able to help the millions of people suffering around the world, but as Mother Teresa said best, “I never look at the masses as my responsibility; I look at the individual. I can only love one person at a time—just one, one, one. So you begin.”

So we, too, can begin.

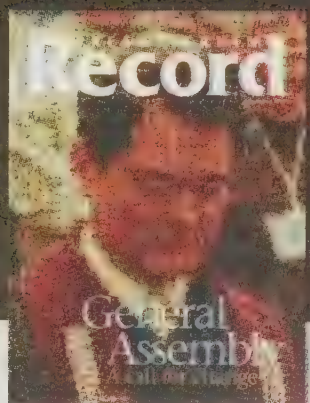
Humanitarian hearts can change laws and policies too. With one voice at a time, we can speak out against the fear and xenophobia that closes borders, reduces aid and silences diplomatic peace building. Humanitarian hearts enlarge humanitarian space. ■

*Elizabeth McWeeny is the President of the Canadian Council for Refugees.*



# Letters

letters@presbyterianrecord.ca



## That Prairie Spirit

Let me say up front: I am not a member of the Presbyterian Church. My lifetime experiences with various churches have been less than positive, leaving me to seek my own private path to faith. I have to confess, however, that every now and again someone that brings a new light to organized faith surprises me.

I have recently come across such a person, a minister in small town Saskatchewan, who radiates his faith and peace to such an extent that even the erstwhile believers such as myself can't help but feel his power of faith. His name is Jonathon Kwon, minister at Trinity, Grenfell and he has made enough of an impact on my family that I feel compelled to share that story with others.

My grandparents have long been members of the church, its choir and its organizing committees. Their quiet faith has been one of the cornerstones of their lives. Out of love and respect for them, whenever we came to visit from our Alberta home, and had the opportunity to go to church with them, we did so. Our joy in that task has always been their happiness, not in the church or its message.

I do not know much about Kwon and his background, except that he and his family are from Korea and they continually sponsor students from Korea to Canada. Since arriving about a year ago, their little group have become the talk of the town; involved both in the community at large as well as taking charge of the congregation. The students have become an integral part of the choir

with beautiful voices singing in either English or Korean.

What I do know about Kwon is that he is a dedicated minister to his congregation. He walks the walk of faith and love; he demonstrates it with every action. His kindness and care for his congregation is plainly apparent in all he does, and not just in what he says Sunday mornings.

Our family suffered a terrible loss in 2006, just before Christmas, when

**I have to confess, however, that every now and again someone that brings a new light to organized faith surprises me**

my beloved grandmother was diagnosed with terminal cancer and then left us within days. She had not been feeling well most of the fall and Jonathon, with his students in tow, made a number of visits to pray and sing to her, both at home and in the various hospitals. She loved music and the joy it gave her to have them come and sing a few songs uplifted her spirit for days. When she came to the hospital in Regina for the last time, they made several visits to her in the space of a few days, driving the full 90 minutes to Regina just to sing to her. They were there on the day she passed and I know it made a difference in the quiet transition she made to God later that day.

A few weeks later was Christmas and the best gift of the season was when Jonathon, his family and students came into the farmyard with lighted candles and began singing carols. They sang only three and it took us a few ➤

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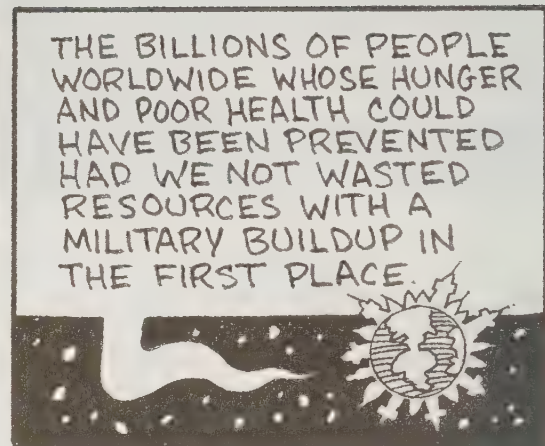
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## Pontius' Puddle



moments to discover the source of the amazing music. Once finished, they dashed off to the next house, the next farm, driving around all that Christmas Eve, bringing their gift of song to most everyone in their congregation. It moved us to tears and it is a Christmas gift I will always treasure.

Jonathon and his group quietly go about their business, keeping their congregational family together, supported and loved. The people of Trinity, Grenfell are blessed to have him, his family and extended family. Thank you, Rev. Kwon and your wonderful, smiling troupe of student singers for all you have done for my family.

PAULA POLMAN, EDMONTON

### Different but still Neighbours

I've always struggled with the idea that there is only one way to serve God, and that is the Christian way. As a Jew, Christ surely followed the Ten Commandments, but he also gave us a new, golden one to live by which tells us to love our neighbour as our self. Well, my neighbours, like his at the time, represent many races and religions. They are different from me, but they are my brothers and my sisters. We are one, because God created us all.

C.S. Lewis writes in *Mere Christianity*, "Is it not frightfully unfair that this new life should be confined to

people who have heard of Christ and been able to believe in Him? But the truth is God has not told us what His arrangements about the other people are. We do know that no man can be saved except through Christ; we do not know that only those who know Him can be saved through Him."

FAYE LIPPITT, CALGARY

### What about Knox?

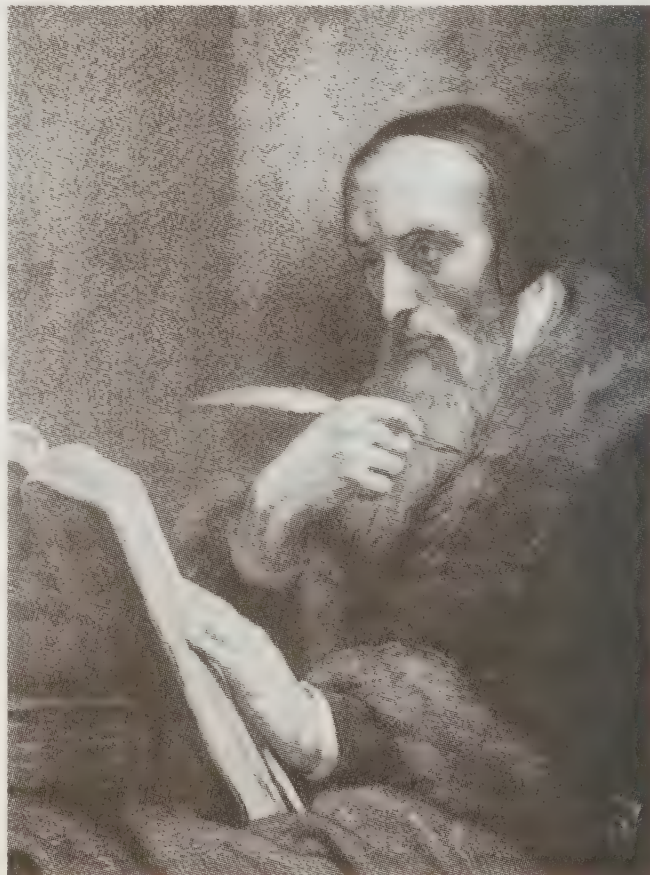
*Re Calvin at 500, June.*

I don't remember the cinco-centenary of John Knox being celebrated. Knox was my 'theoretical parent' and of more significance to Scotland and by extension to North America since so many Scottish divines came to spread the Word since the 16th century, taking up positions in various churches and colleges.

Amongst tutors who most affcted Calvin and Knox, John Mair (1467-1550) was the 'main man.' Coming from Haddington, Scotland, he tutored Knox at St. Salvatore's College (founded 1411) in St. Andrews where

he was provost. Mair, after a move to Glasgow University (1451) where he was principal for five years, moved to Paris where as professor of theology he lectured Calvin as well as greats such as Loyola and Rabelais.

However, as the basic Calvinistic reforms took place there was a slow trend towards Knox's type of reform, which approved of a less harsh message and less harsh disci-





pline. After many years a Moderate Party came into existence during the Scottish enlightenment era and came to dominate the General Assemblies much to their betterment.

Note that Knox did not flee his country when the going got rough (he was a Roman Catholic until the age of 40) nor did he send anyone to the stake. It is recorded however that he spent two years at the galleys for his heretical preaching as punishment. There are hundreds of portals in churches and colleges bearing the name of Knox.

FREDERIC FORSYTH, BARRIE, ONT.

## Applauding Change

I just wanted to congratulate you and your staff on the July/August issue. It was uplifting. Finally, I am hearing the word "change" spoken out loud. The moderator seems intent on taking this on as a challenge. It pulled at the heartstrings of this disillusioned former Presbyterian elder who now takes up pew space at the local Baptist Church.

I don't have a point of contact with Presbyterian clergy anymore (my former church remains vacant and no doubt always will) so I was hoping you would pass on to Rev. Cheol Soon Park my admiration of his task. Not only that, but I would like to say: "Here I am!" I would

be glad to offer my service to the PCC anywhere I can promote biblically inspired "change" in the church of Jesus Christ. I feel like a Presbyterian outsider now, but God knows that I love His church, and that I have a passion to see all people invited to meet Jesus; even in the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

I think this gentleman may need all the supporters he can get. I know first-hand how difficult change is for small town Presbyterians in my locale. I suspect there are more locations across the country who will also be less than impressed.

CAROL ANN KEYS, VIA EMAIL

## Hope Appears

I was sad to read that Richard Fee's heart was "scrapped;" however, there seems to be hope in that he appears to be doing well without it.

I continue to enjoy the *Record*.

W. VOORT, WINNIPEG

SEPTEMBER 2, 2008

## Corrections

Dave Kettle is not the first Presbyterian to head the chaplaincy. You can read more about that on our website.

## Also on our website

A remembered history off the PCC on P.E.I. ■

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#### Carol McCormick

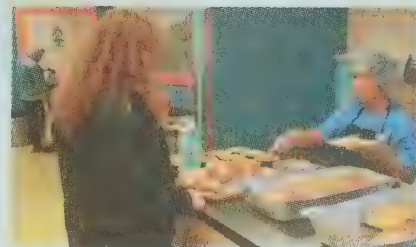
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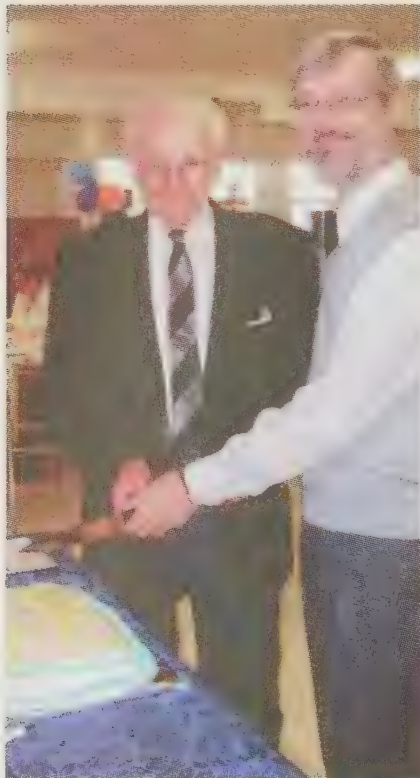
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Please visit the monthly PnP page at [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca) for more.



For its 154th anniversary service, the session of Knox, Wallaceburg, Ont., led the worship. Supply preacher Rev. David Maxwell (at the cake with long time member Fred Hubert) spoke about his recent trip to Peru. Then he and Margaret Maxwell (they're related by ring) sang their own compositions *Each Step I Take* and *Got Any Rivers*. And that beautiful cake was made by elder Cheryl Babcock. Make your reservations now for the 155th anniversary Sunday!



These six people—Jean Day, Myrtle Bennett, Margaret Carrington, Harold Culham, Lydia Olson, and Russell Tilt—represent 153 years of service to Richmond Hill, Ont., as elders. With the introduction of term service in 2006, the six have decided to retire from active session.



Braeside, St. Albert, Alberta, celebrated Tartan Day in April with 23 folks decked out in their favourite clans. Rev. Connie Lee's (rear, right) Scottish roots are not particularly deep but she is willing to overcome that with a Royal Stewart tam.





The last time Joseph MacLachlan was seen in these pages was when he had convinced the *Record's* Amy Sedlezky to change her last name. Well, he's got another woman in his life, Maya, who will also declare the MacLachlan colours. These three neo-Scots are doing well and in no rush to bring the new mom's byline back to this publication.

Anthony Chgahno, a member of the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation, Cape Croker, led worship at Knox, Kincardine, Ont., for National Aboriginal Day in June. Pictured: Chgahno and Rev. Susan Samuel.



### On our website:

A stunning sunset in Penatanguishine. A new sound system in Argyle. Angels, Lambs, Caterpillars and Butterflies in Gale. Caven, Bolton has Family Sunday at Evangel Hall. An annual women's retreat at Camp Douglas. Another annual tradition—celebrating grads—in Campbell River. High Tea in Puslinch. Cake of the Month in Stayner. And, a magnificent new sign in West Vancouver.

*People and Places* entries published in the magazine are chosen through a monthly lottery. However, many submissions prove themselves unpublishable on a technical level. Every effort is made each month by the PnP Editor to get better photos—not too dark, not too light, with ample digital information. Before submitting please read the essay *How To Submit Photos In A Digital Age* found on the *People and Places* page of [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca).





**Mission to India:** Laura Roberts (Rosedale, Toronto), Raquel Ramos (St. Andrew and St. Paul's, Montreal), Cecilia Lu and Jenny So (Chinese, Mississauga) were among nine young people who participated in this year's Youth in Mission trip. They visited the Bhil Fields and met Pauline Brown, as well as village health workers supported by PWS&D.

# Lam proud of partnerships

BELLA LAM is leaving Presbyterian World Service and Development after five years as the Africa and Middle East program co-ordinator.

PWS&D "has grown a lot" over the past five years, she says. Programming has expanded, especially in the aftermath of the tsunami and other natural disasters during which many international partnerships were developed. Several of its most prominent programs, including the Word Without AIDS campaign, began shortly after Lam arrived at national offices. "I'm really proud of the way the whole denomination pulled together with World Without AIDS. And the way partners have stepped up to the plate."

According to Ken Kim, staff director of PWS&D, partnership is key to the organization's work. Ties with partners are important, he said, "but partnership is a two-way street" and sustainability is integral to long-term success. "It's not

enough to simply build a well," Kim said, the local community must be involved as an equal partner in all aspects of the project, and must be educated and able to sustain that project without continual assistance.

He was quick to add that while it is important to maintain ties with partners, the organization looks forward to the day when it is not needed anymore.

"We very much see ourselves as providing tools," Lam said. "We're helping our partners to be in the driver's seat more."

Kim said the new co-ordinator "will help us discern what to do as a faith based organization to deal with partners, both church and non-church groups, and to tackle issues that are very complex." —CPurvis ■



**Ken Kim and Bella Lam**



# Poverty focus

A week to reach Millenium Goals. BY CONNIE PURVIS

CONGREGATIONS and individuals can help to reach the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by participating in the Week to End Poverty (Oct. 12-19) through prayer, education and communication with members of parliament. Events can be registered at [www.standupagainstpoverty.org](http://www.standupagainstpoverty.org).

It is a form of symbolic action, Stephen Allen, associate secretary of Justice Ministries and a member of KAIROS' board of directors, told the *Record*. "If you never reflect on something as a part of your reality, it doesn't exist." The campaign incorporates World Food Day on October 16, the United Nations International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October

17 and Trade Week of Action.

Among the United Nations Millennium Development Goals is a commitment to "reduce the proportion of people affected by extreme poverty and hunger" by half by 2015. Canada is a signatory.

**"If you never reflect on something as a part of your reality, it doesn't exist"**

With the general election on the horizon, voters have an opportunity to engage with these issues, said Allen. "People should feel comfortable raising issues of poverty with the parties, either when they come knocking on the door or at all candidates' meetings." Ask candidates what their party's position is on poverty reduction, he suggested, and ask if they have a set timeline to achieve their goals. Although he recognized that "it won't happen overnight," Allen said commitment to something over five years—even if that commitment is only 80 per cent fulfilled—is still a step in the right direction.

KAIROS' resources are available on [kairoscanada.org](http://kairoscanada.org); they focus on the root causes of poverty and encourage long-term eradication rather than short-term solutions. Additional resources can be attained from Justice Ministries at national offices.

According to [standupagainstpoverty.org](http://standupagainstpoverty.org), last year's event set a new record with 43.7 million participants worldwide. ■



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW FAIZ

## BUILDING HOPE

**Does the word "lap" conjure up warm thoughts of having a child sitting with you to read a story, sing a song, or do finger play games?**

**A**t Flora House, LAPP – Learning and Play Program is held once a

week for children ages 1-4 and their caretaker (mother, father, grandmother, etc.).

Many of the families have faced so many difficulties over the generations that they never learned how to play with and nurture their children. They are being guided in this process with a non-threatening, uncritical, affirming atmosphere. There are bags containing a few books and small toys for the families to take home to help reinforce what they have learned.



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# A Person of Integrity

Margaret Henderson retires. BY CONNIE PURVIS

MARGARET HENDERSON, administrator, teacher and preacher's kid, has spent her life serving the Presbyterian Church, and retired last month from her position as senior administrator of Ministry and Church Vocations. She had worked at national offices for 33 years.

"The extraordinary way that she has served in her position has helped to shape the entire work of the ministry office," said Rev. Daniel Cho on behalf of the Life and Mission Agency during a moment of appreciation at this year's General Assembly. "We thank God for Marg and for her work, and we pray that God will bless her as she enters the next phase of her life and ministry."

Henderson started in 1975 in the newly established Board of Ministry, and her involvement has been widespread. "In my own work there have been three areas that have given me much satisfaction," Henderson said in her farewell speech. "The circulation of *Women's Perspectives* (a place to explore issues that are of concern to women), the Women in Ministry Committee (which seeks to support women in leadership in the church and encourage networking), and the guidance conference (a place where candidates are challenged and encouraged in their journey to ministry)."

She has also supported the work of the Order of Diaconal Ministries and the Committee on Continuing Education.

Her church involvement began at birth, and developed throughout her youth and adulthood. She grew



Associate secretary Susan Shaffer with Margaret Henderson and former secretaries Tom Gemmell and Jean Armstrong.


up in the southern Ontario towns of Hillsdale, Walkerton, and Woodstock where her father served as a Presbyterian minister. In her youth, she attended Camp Kintail and participated in the Presbyterian Young People's Society. Prior to joining national offices, she spent eight years teaching grades six and seven in west Toronto. She has long served as elder at St. Andrew's Humber Heights, Toronto, and is currently the clerk of session.

At the farewell ceremony at national offices, her brother Rev. John Henderson, described her as "a person of integrity. A person who forged strong friendships and nurtured them over long periods of time. A person who is loyal and kind. A person who was organized, meticulous and thorough. A person with a healthy sense of humour, and who introduced clowning to her nieces and nephews. A person of gentle spirit and a very generous heart.

A woman who practices the art of hospitality. A woman of deep faith who puts her faith in actions in such things as prison visiting. Yet also a woman of the world who enjoys theatre and the arts. A woman of deep spirituality who is renewed and replenished in her spiritual retreats and journaling."

Henderson told the *Record* she will miss her colleagues at national offices and also the sense of connection with the church which came from working at the hub of the PCC's activities. But she suggested that retirement would not mean an end to her involvement.

Jeffery Crawford, who worked with Henderson for several weeks prior to her retirement, has replaced her in the Ministry and Church Vocations office. "She's indeed a wonderful teacher," said Crawford. "I know that I have very, very big shoes to fill ... and it's been a privilege to work with her these past few weeks." ■



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## Vine Resources

THE VINE HELPLINE, the PCC's information and education network, has released a series of new resources for this fall.

Living With Muslim Neighbours and Learning To Pray are two on-line youth programs now available for download. An ecology mission study entitled Partners: Living In God's Creation is designed to help children think about living responsibly with the environment.

The Vine encourages churches to subscribe to the new youth magazine, *With: The Magazine for Radical Christian Youth*. The first issue features topics such as the 100-mile diet and teens' reflections on divorce and blended families. The Vine and the PCC are not involved in the magazine.

Two series of men's breakfast Bible study placemats, *Religion May Be Hazardous To Your Health* and *Leadership*, written by John Congram, former editor of the *Presbyterian Record*, are now available by download or order through the Book Room. Each series contains studies, discussion questions, and "manly activities."

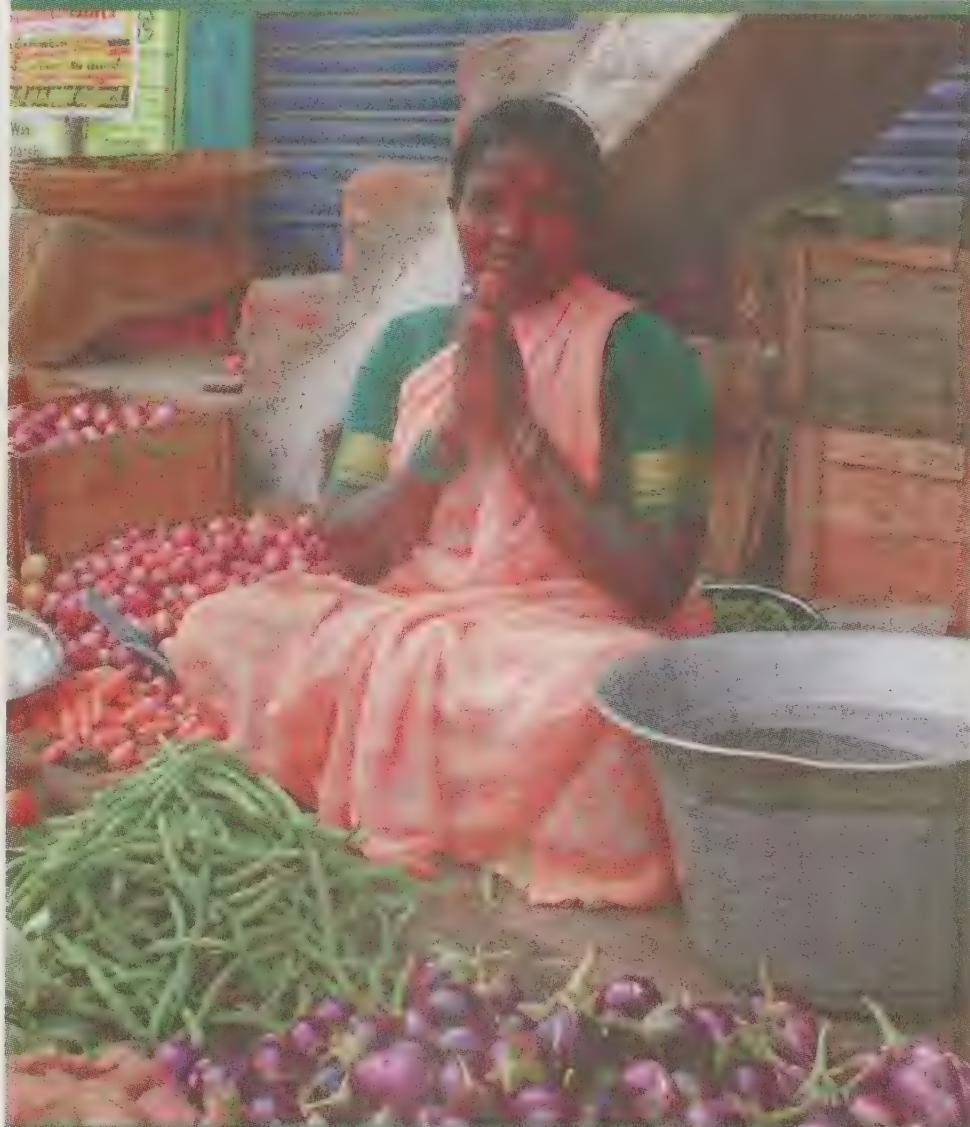
Three courses designed to equip teachers and leaders are available for free from Opening Doors to Discipleship—([www.openingdoorstodiscipleship.com](http://www.openingdoorstodiscipleship.com)). Registration is required; the denominational log-in number is 42596. The first two courses are available now. The third will be available in December.

Audio and visual resources include promotional DVDs for Canada Youth 2009, The Vine, and Opening Doors to Discipleship.

Denominational resources, from the Vine and elsewhere, are available at [presbyterian.ca/resources](http://presbyterian.ca/resources) or can be ordered through the Book Room.

—CPurvis ■

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# Coping with Memories

A residential school survivor describes her healing process. BY VIV KETCHUM

I SENT AWAY for my Common Experience payment thinking I had been at a residential school for only a couple of years, but it was actually five years. I had blocked those memories out of my mind; the anger I had felt was at the loss of my childhood and the time away from my family. Time away from my father and mother. My siblings were at the same residential school, but I wasn't allowed to be near them, or on the same floor. The wholeness and innocence of my childhood was stolen. It was an overwhelming sense of grief I was experiencing, shedding bitter tears over what I had lost in my life.

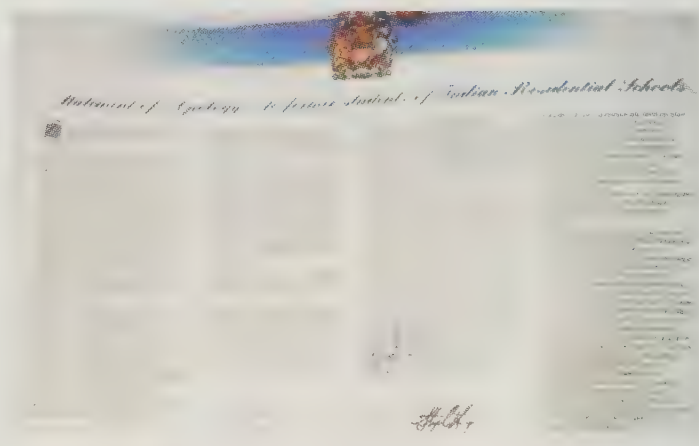
This was a difficult time in my healing journey and it was about to get worse. That piece of paper and the money that soon came with it brought home the reality of what had happened to me at Cecilia Jeffery. My broken finger was visible proof of a beating by a staff member and I had nightmare flashbacks of my experiences. Thoughts of suicide came to me during the night. Suicide to escape the sheer pain of what was inside of me ... the emotional pain ... the emptiness inside ... echoes of homesickness even though I was an adult with children of my own. One night, I felt my room turning into my old dorm and I felt like I was pulled into the past. There was a small voice asking me why was I struggling so hard and why didn't I just give in and join the others. This voice scared me and I talked to Rev. Margeret Mullen who told me she would pray for me. There was counseling available to survivors, which I made use of right away, and was given a number for the 24-hour crisis line for residential school survivors.

The counselor gave me some positive ways to cope. The headaches eased up and I was feeling better emotion-

ally. I took time off from work and school. My sisters and brother were also going through similar experiences. We had gone to the same residential school and they were there longer than me. My family was coping with their experiences by drinking. My brother was taken twice to the hospital for alcohol poisoning and one of my sisters came close to committing suicide. She told me the money was bringing back old memories that were very hard for her to deal with. She didn't want to ask for help from any body, so I will wait and hope my family survives this stormy period. I had one brother, Andy who passed away two years ago waiting for this stage of the residential school settlement. I read the obituaries of friends and family in my home newspaper this past year. Many of them were under 50 years of age.

Yes, the money brought some comfort during the holiday season last year, but it also opened old wounds that have yet to heal for many of us. My memories have not gone away; I have to deal with them. I want people to truly understand what life was like in residential schools and trying to live in its shadow as a grown adult.

On June 11, I was very fortunate to witness the Apology to the Residential School survivors. Maybe for some it was just a bunch of words spoken, but I heard the sincerity in their voices and saw the truth when the political leaders shook hands with the



**Viv Ketchum's copy of the official apology signed by PM Harper and National Chief Phil Fontaine.**

residential school survivors that are also our aboriginal leaders. There was a brief ceremony afterwards hosted by the government. Prime Minister Stephen Harper and National Chief Phil Fontaine signed an official apology. Again the aboriginal leaders spoke to the crowd that included Governor-General Michaëlle Jean, Elijah Harper and Justice Harry S. Laforme. Afterwards the Prime Minister shook hands with us residential schools survivors. Stories and pictures were shared with one another without the media witnessing it. Copies of the apology were handed out and I was able to have mine signed by Fontaine and Harper. I am going to use the positive emotions and memories of that day to push away the nightmares that are overwhelming me. It will help me move on in my healing process. ■

*Vivian Ketchum works at Winnipeg Inner City Missions, and is a member of the Healing and Reconciliation Advisory Committee for the Presbyterian Church. She hails from Wauzhushk Onigum (Rat Portage) First Nation near Kenora, Ont., and attended the PCC's Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School. This is a memoir of her experiences—then and now.*



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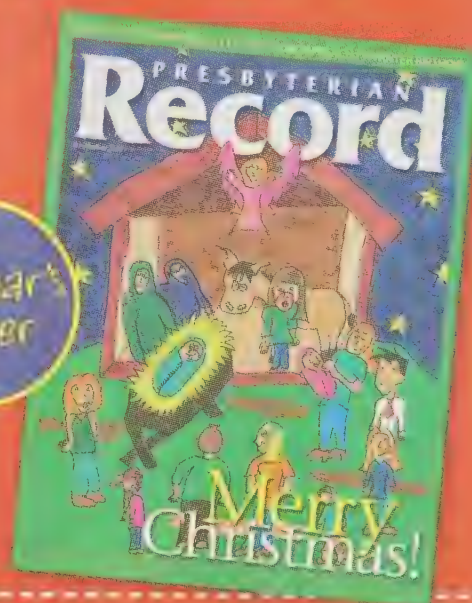
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## The truth in testing

**ENI**—Rev. Mvume Dandala, general secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches, got a personal HIV/AIDS test in September as part of his campaign encouraging mass voluntary testing throughout Africa.

"I think more pastors should come for testing and not hide it," said Dandala. "I am feeling greatly encouraged."

The AACC leader explained that AIDS is like other diseases and people do not have to die of it, as people who are HIV-positive are able to manage their lives through eating the right foods and receiving medication.

"I urge the churches not to throw away people because they are infected, but to embrace them, to encourage them, to have them go to clinics, to help them to have something to eat, to help them to be strong," said Dandala.

## Small is beautiful

**ENI**—One of the world's smallest nations, Tuvalu is slowly but surely sinking into the Pacific Ocean. Political and Church leaders want the world to join them in saving their nation of 12,000 people, and in doing so, save the world itself from the worst effects of climate change.

Don't Give Up On Us, is the plea to

the world by the head of the largest non-governmental organization in the country, the Christian Church of Tuvalu (Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu).

Rev. Tofina Falani, the church's president, says his country is "on the frontline of climate change, and the evidence is before our eyes. Words can't explain it, but I am so thankful to God for this 26 square kilometres and I don't want to be forced by another power to leave this place."

Tuvalu is the world's fourth smallest country, bigger only than the Vatican City, Monaco and Nauru.

## Sacred text diluted

**ENI**—A special Bible published in India that seeks to place the Christian Scriptures within a local context has drawn mixed reactions, with some critics objecting to quotations from the sacred texts of other faiths in commentaries included in the Holy Book.

The *New Community Bible* drew accolades from many Roman Catholic publications when it was published in June. Other Catholics, however, have not greeted the venture with enthusiasm. "In the commentaries, parallels are repeatedly drawn with Hindu deities, Hindu religious texts and mythology, biblical incidents and personalities and Christian philosophies," lamented Michael Prabhu, a Catholic based in Chennai.

Complaints received state the commentaries amounted to diluting the uniqueness of Christian faith.

## Scandal of poverty

**ENI**—African churches and international faith-based organizations meeting in Accra have urged governments to end "the scandal of poverty" by delivering aid that advances development and not placing unacceptable obligations on poor countries. "Aid must be judged by what it delivers on development," Rev. Mvume Dandala said during the September High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in the Ghanaian capital, which brought

together more than 800 representatives of developing country governments and civil society organizations.

## Life more important than power

**ENI**—Christian leaders in Thailand have called on churches to urge Thai authorities to deal peacefully with anti-government protests, following the declaration of a state of emergency after thousands of demonstrators took to the streets.

"Churches should express to the ruling regime the need to deal with people in a peaceful way and not to use arms or weapons to crack down on unrest," said Rev. Pradit Takerngrangsarit, president of the Payap University in Thailand. "Human rights and human life are the most important factors, rather than being in power based on the blood of the people."

Anti-government protests began in Thailand in August as supporters of the People's Alliance for Democracy began a series of demonstrations urging the resignation of Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej.

## A prayer for the dreaded

**ENI**—To boost morale and ease the Monday blues, the (Anglican) Church of England offered early morning commuters on September 1 a prayer published in a freesheet morning newspaper read by some 1.5 million who travel by train and subway on their way to work throughout Britain.

The prayer, contained in an advertisement paid for by the church, asks for God's help in dealing with everyday concerns of home and business life. The initiative is in response to a poll commissioned by the Church of England of some 1,200 randomly-selected people which found that as the new season begins in the workplace and at home, one third expressed the wish to make a change in their lifestyle as they anticipated an extra busy period at work, a prospect which one in eight people said they "dreaded." ■



# People are People

Thirty-two movies later,  
that's all he's learned.

BY ANDREW FAIZ

After having watched 32 international movies over 10 days during the Montreal Film Festival, where I was a member of the Ecumenical Jury, I came away with only the most banal observation: People are people, everywhere on the planet.

Even the places where they live are similar: Norway's *Wolf* and *Rumba* from Belgium were both set in neighbourhoods that looked like North Bay, Ont., or Edmonton. Condo/apartments in Tokyo (*Nobody To Watch Over Me*) or Buenos Aires (*Rain*) looked just like ones in Toronto.

In fact *Rain* had one of my favourite lines from my week of film festing: asked what folks do in B.A., the female protagonist replies that Argentines do what people do anywhere in cities, stay in, go out, grab a meal, a drink, go clubbing. And, as it turns out, the majority of scenes in the majority of movies took place over a table of food or a table of drinks. 'Cause that's what people do when they socialize.

And, so a dinner party in *Rain* looked like dinner parties in my family, with way too much food, platters and platters of it, and lots and lots of warmth and friendship and conversation. Just like a dinner party in Mongolia (*Nima's Women*) or even during the civil war in Serbia (*The Tour*).

Of course the dishes were all different—when I retire it'll be my life's project to compile the million different ways humans cook chicken—and so, for the most part, was the way people dressed. But, there were as many similarities as differences and this banal thought (People are People) kept throbbing through my head all week.

Take *Nima's Women*, set in Mongolia, with people living in yurts, which are large permanent tents, herding sheep. That sounds exotic, different, a story of the other, but the plot has two daughters lying to their mother on her birthday because they don't want her to be disappointed in them. The Mongolians' sense of propriety and social mores makes Scandinavians and Anglo-Saxon Protestants seem effusive and emotionally open by comparison.

Workplaces in Barcelona (*Welcome to Farewell-Gutmann*) look just like modern day workplaces—even the photo-

copier is where the photocopier should be. And parts of Quebec glimpsed in *En Plein Coeur* and *The Necessities of Life* looked just like the rest of Canada. It was shocking.

The latter movie (en français, *Ce Qu'il Faut Pour Vivre*) is the story of an Inuit from near Baffin Island who, in 1952, is forced to come to a Quebec City sanitarium because he has tuberculosis. It was in a way the most exotic movie I saw because it introduces Canadians to a part of their own culture and landscape. My favourite moment is early on when he is first brought to the hospital. Of all the strange and wonderful sights in Quebec, the one that excites his most is to see a mature tree.

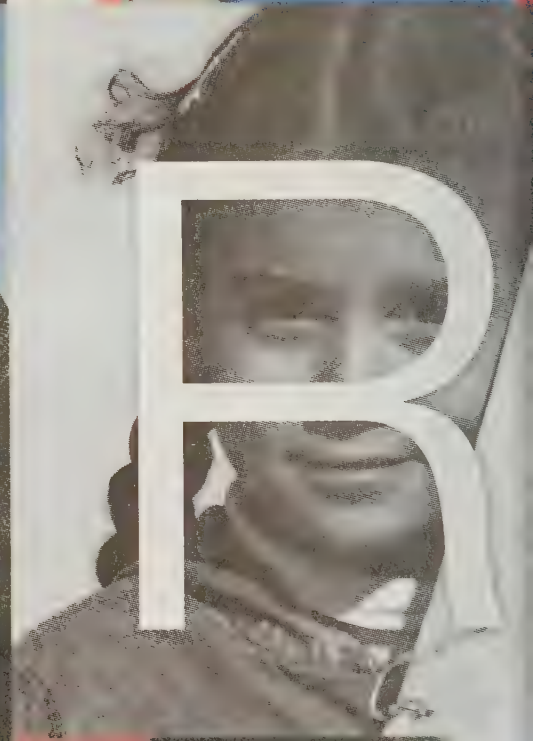
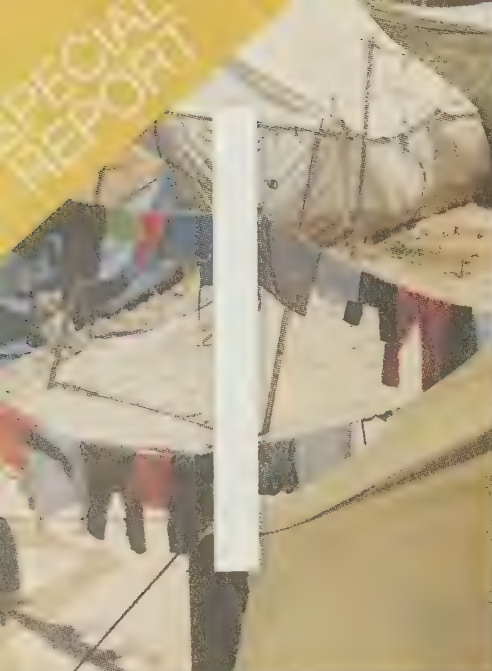
**The Mongolian's sense of propriety and social mores makes Scandinavians and Anglo-Saxon Protestants seem effusive and emotionally open by comparison**

And what are the necessities of life? Love, family, community. People are people, after all. Several of the movies had folks off on spiritual quests to find themselves—*Nowhere Man*, *Rain*, *En Plein Coeur*, *Four Chapters*, *The Stranger*. How tiresome and boring the movie was, was in equal proportion to how well the protagonist was able to create or find love, family and/or community.

I'm actually very disappointed in myself—I think of myself as a deeper thinker than this, and perhaps by next month I'll have something really profound to say about my experience at the festival, but for now, I am left with only these banal thoughts: People and People and they crave Love, Family, Community. Don't believe me? I got a list of 32 movies proves otherwise. ■

*Andrew Faiz is the managing editor of the Presbyterian Record. The mandate for the Ecumenical Jury was to promote movies "that distinguish themselves not only by artistic merit but also by their exploration of the ethical, social and spiritual values that make life human."*





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# MAKE LOVE YC

## A SPECIAL REPORT ON IRAQI REFUGEES IN

**THE ORIGINAL WALLED CITY** of Damascus still stands and its kilometres of narrow streets with overhanging balconies and street level shops is a strange and wonderful world. Some of the original gates to the city can still be seen and as one walks through Bab Touma, the Christian quarter, it is easy to imagine the adventures the Apostle Paul had in his day. My road to Damascus experience was less dramatic though full of blessings—but it was also a window into a tragedy of enormous proportions.

In the spring of 2007, I worked with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Syria interviewing refugees and writing their stories of persecution—the reasons they had fled their countries. These reports were then submitted to countries of resettlement, such as the United States, Canada, Australia and others. Our hope was that they would all be accepted by one of these countries and the refugees could start new lives in safety.

In the five years since the invasion of Iraq by the multinational forces, more than 2.4 million Iraqi refugees fled to the neighbouring countries of Jordan and Lebanon with the majority fleeing to Syria. Syria now hosts approximately 1.4 million refugees and Damascus has received the vast majority, swelling its population by about 30 per cent.

It is known as the Iraq refugee crisis and it is the largest urban caseload that the UN refugee agency has ever dealt with. There are no camps to shelter these refugees, except ones for Palestinians and these are located in the desert regions. For those who wish to register with the UN, the long wait in the hot sun is a reminder of all they have lost. Iraqis living in Syria are forbidden to work, even if they could find employment. Most have been living on savings which are vanishing. Some work in the underground economy.

There is evidence that some women and young girls are being forced into prostitution and other forms of exploitation. Kids support their families by selling items on the





This page and others: Assorted scenes from the Al-Tanf camp outside of Damascus, described by one observer as “a graveyard for the living.”

# OUR AIM SYRIA. BY GLYNIS WILLIAMS

street. Few children go to school—unable to afford the fees and the schools have limited places. In a reversal of the usual situation, it is Iraqis inside Iraq who are sending money to sustain their family members in neighbouring countries, often risking their lives in the process. Of the 90,000 Iraqis who were registered with the UN when I left in July 2007, 10,000 had cancer.

Syria and Jordan have closed their borders, effectively imprisoning people inside Iraq—people who have been wanting to flee. Syria and Jordan are carrying the burden of this crisis with little support from the international community. That includes Canada.

Let me share a few stories. They are not extraordinary; in many ways they are typical. But for some reason they have stuck with me. I have changed names for the sake of privacy and security.

Amad is a 40-year-old man of the Mandaean faith. Mandeans are a minority and they have a particular rever-

ence for John the Baptist. They were persecuted under Saddam’s regime, and still are. Amad had owned a liquor store in Iraq, which was destroyed by a bomb. Following the loss of his shop, he went to work for a relative who was a goldsmith. He had not been married long when he took a walk one day with his wife and brother. They were recognized as Mandeans and threatened by a gang. They turned and ran

but his wife was not able to run fast enough and was shot dead. Amad and his brother fled to Syria.



## AMAD

**ON THE DAY I MET HIM**, Amad had a protruding eye, which I learned was the result of a growing brain tumour. He was going blind and required the assistance of his brother and sister-in-law to manage daily ➤





## AMAD'S STORY DOES NOT STAND OUT BECAUSE OF WHAT HE HAD SUFFERED, AS SADLY SO MANY HAVE SIMILAR STORIES

activities. He begged me to get his brother interviewed for resettlement. As family members do not automatically get interviewed, I asked him what had happened to his brother. I learned his brother had co-owned the liquor store, meaning he too had experienced persecution on the basis of his profession and fit the refugee convention definition. Amad's story does not stand out because of what he had suffered, as sadly so many have similar stories. I remember him because he had been dealing with a life threatening illness for years with no treatment because nothing was done for Iraqis until recently, except to register them.

This gentle man had carried into exile his burden of illness and the loss of his beloved, with no help from anyone. His disease was advanced. We immediately referred his case to Norway where medical cases are taken without interview, relying on the medical reports provided. After several weeks, the decision on resettlement came back: refused. No reasons given nor required. Did they believe he was too far advanced to make it worthwhile to perform the risky brain surgery? Who knows? When my colleague phoned him with the bad news, adding how sorry we were for the decision, he graciously replied that he knew we were doing all we could.

I thank God that the Netherlands interviewed and accepted Amad and his brother, and he is there now.

I remember leaving the room to see whether I could

find his brother's file number and mentioning the dilemma to one of my co-workers who had worked with me as a translator for a short while. Nida, a Muslim, is one of the kindest and most professional women I have worked with and I shared in passing that I was worried Amad's brother would not fit the criteria. When I returned later to say that his brother had co-owned the liquor store that had been bombed, meaning that he was eligible for resettlement, we simultaneously made the familiar thumbs-up "Yes!" sign.



### NINEWAH

**A YOUNG WOMAN AND HER BROTHER**, both in their twenties, entered the interview room on a particularly hot afternoon. Their parents had left Iraq in 2004, arrived in Canada to make a refugee claim and were accepted. Their younger sister was with them. Ninewah explained that her parents were now citizens but under Canadian law they were unable to be sponsored by their parents as they were over the age of 22. For years they had been in Syria hoping for an interview. Ninewah added that her mother had cancer with only months to live. I told them to return with photographs and we would help complete the myriad extra forms that Canada





requires. I asked my supervisor if their cases could be accelerated. I am happy to report they are now in Canada, having arrived on the day their mother was scheduled for surgery. I pray this family has at least a little while together.

There are countless horror stories that could be told. Some days I felt there was nothing new that I could hear—but there always was. How many more children would be kidnapped? Or a father killed in front of his child? How many more letters with a single bullet inside would be left on the doorstep? Or a streak of blood painted on the wall of a home?

If I keep telling these stories, you might be moved for a time, but what then?

How can we make sense of the brutality unfolding in Iraq? This was a once secular country, where intermarriage across faiths was possible. Neighbourhoods were mixed with people living side-by-side from diverse backgrounds. Kids played together and visited in each other's homes. This was a country with a well-educated population—many Iraqis were obsessed with education, even venturing back into Iraq in spite of the danger so that their children could sit year-end exams and receive their diplomas.

For me the biggest challenge is how to make sense of this horror in the context of faith. War is the breakdown of human community, the intentional dividing of the world into the weak and the strong. Those who provoke war believe

their cause is just and noble, against foes that are evil or sub-human. Professional armies are not the only ones who fight wars; war empowers those with a desire to murder.

Listening to the stories of Iraqis, it became apparent that people in certain neighbourhoods were being driven from their homes which were then occupied by families of another ethnic religious community. Sometimes it was the militias operating in that area that occupied the homes. Many people simply grabbed their documents and personal items and fled for their lives leaving all their belongings behind. There was no time to pack up.

In situations like this, you relocate to where you have family or where trusted community members live. There is safety in numbers as the cliché goes. There is safety in being with those who identify themselves as you do. Your world is reduced to those who are just like you.

Persistent fear destroys trust. The seeds of the current violence were sown by Saddam Hussein who relentlessly persecuted political enemies and groups that threatened his power. Now the violence is justified on religious grounds. Mixed marriage couples who have lived together happily for years are told to convert or to divorce the offending spouse. Threatened with death, it is hard to stand up to this. The tragedy is that in some cases one partner starts to believe this lunacy, or sometimes it is their family members who pressure them. Families may split or they flee the country as ➤





## WHAT A RADICAL STATEMENT OF ETHICS: IF WE FAIL IN LOVE, WE FAIL IN ALL THINGS

refugees in order to resist this fanaticism and stay together as a family. Imagine the effect this has on children.

This is religious fundamentalism manipulated by criminal forces and Jesus speaks to this religious worldview.

Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan is powerful. The Samaritan, considered by Jews as a religious heretic, the man of the wrong faith, sees a hurting human being on the ground. He does not see the person who will make him unclean and therefore unacceptable to God. The Priest and the Levite, on the other hand, the two men of the right faith, cross the road and walk by. Their religion will not permit them to stop. Jesus' message here is incredibly simple, unbelievably beautiful and as difficult to put into action as anything we will ever have to do.

Paul captures the simplicity, the beauty and the difficulty of Jesus' message in 1 Corinthians 13. "And now faith, hope and love abide, these three, and the greatest of these is love." He begins the next chapter: "make love your aim." Not biblical inerrancy, not purity, nor obedience to holiness codes. Love.

What a radical statement of ethics: if we fail in love, we fail in all things.

One man and his family stand out as an example of Jesus' compassion. Every day there were refugees who were

asked to come as standbys, in case there was a no-show among our scheduled interviews. It was mid-afternoon and the interviews were exhausting but an old woman, a couple and their child were sitting in the waiting room. The translator working with me agreed to stay late and what unfolded stayed with us both for a long time.

The tall, thin man had been a human rights advocate during the time of Saddam. His mother said Naim was a spokesperson for a human rights association which gave him a national profile. Eventually Naim was arrested, tortured and left to die in prison. For many months his family did not know where he was being held. His mother was a seamstress for a distant relative of Saddam's and this woman used her connections to find out where he was held. With a combination of bribes and a sympathetic officer, he was able to escape. He was almost dead from starvation and his wounds. At over two metres in height, he weighed less than 60 kilos, about 130 pounds. He fled Iraq, landing in a Syrian refugee camp that he described as inhuman. He fled to Turkey and later Greece and learned both native languages. Naim worked with refugees, translating documents and interpreting during interviews. He also studied theology.

Hearing of his father's poor health, he decided to take his chances and return to Iraq. He started to work in the church as a deacon and he married.

One day, armed masked men entered his Baghdad home and kidnapped his two-year-old daughter while his wife was alone at home. Later that day a ransom demand of \$10,000 was received by phone. As he tried to sell things and accumulate the money, he suffered a massive heart attack and was hospitalized for several days. He was frantic with worry.

After one week the ransom was exchanged and in a complicated drop-off and pick-up arrangement, Naim and his daughter were finally reunited. Shortly after the child's release a car bomb destroyed her father's car parked in front of the church. The church was likely the target but who could know for sure if this was not another tactic to intimidate the community and make him leave?

In Syria, Naim is a priest in the Assyrian church in the densely populated area of Damascus known as Saida Zeinab. Towards the end of the interview, when I was explaining that his case would be submitted to the United States, he expressed concern about leaving Syria. He said 2,000 people in the church were counting on him. He spoke of the needs among the refugees. Later I learned that this church, known as Ibrahim Khalil, was not only providing spiritual nourishment but also real food to hundreds of refugee families: Christians, Muslims, Mandaean; anyone who needed it. He felt that leaving would be abandoning the people.

How can we do any less? ■

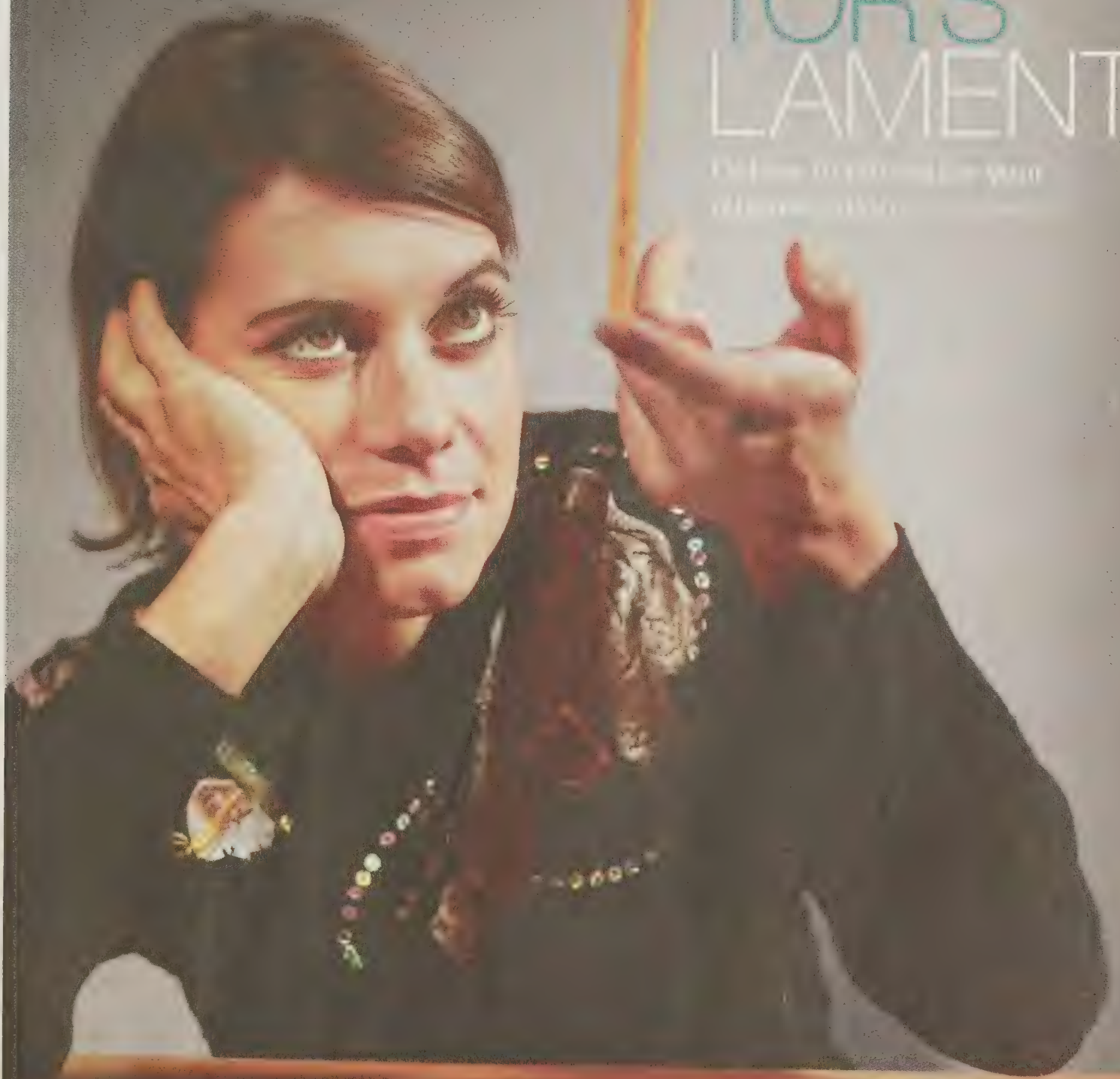
*Rev. Glynis Williams is director of Action Refugees, which is supported by the PCC's Canada Ministries.*



PROCRASTINATION

# THE PROCR- ASTINA- TOR'S LAMENT

Did you procrastinate your way  
through 2007?





# SOMETIMES— AND WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE— IT'S VERY HARD TO WANT TO WORK

**Someone else has turned the TV on**, or there's a book that's just begging to be read, or maybe it's just tempting to sit and stare at nothing for a while. Surely, we rationalize, we're allowed some down time in our busy lives.

Then again, we're not always lazy when we procrastinate. Personally, I find an upcoming math exam is the best incentive to get my English reading done. Paperwork, similarly, has cleaned many a house. And if you've ever had cause to practice the declension of Latin nouns, you will not be surprised to learn that while my grammar may be shaky sometimes, my research assignments are done weeks in advance. Isn't it so much nicer to talk about what we've accomplished than about what we haven't?

Sometimes, of course, it turns out we've accomplished nothing in a day. But that's all right, because we've worked very hard to ensure that tomorrow will be successful. Our pencils are all perfectly sharpened. Our work area is re-organized. Our notes have been copied out, summarized and

highlighted in order of importance. My own reluctance to study Latin and math resurfaced one week in the form of five colours of sticky notes which decorated textbooks in the name of navigational ease. They're actually very useful, but even as I carefully cut and labelled them a voice nagged at my mind: This is not what you should be doing.

So what should I be doing? My mom tells me university is a uniquely selfish time in a person's life, when we get to pick our own courses and keep our own schedule. She says that's a good thing. The voice in my head disagrees. It wants to know how I can take time for pleasure when there's studying to do. Even more than that, it wants to know if my studying is serving anyone but myself. Maybe my forays into academia are only yet another form of procrastination, a way to put off getting a job, taking on responsibilities, doing some good in the world.

I really do want to do some good in the world.

I had hoped that being a Christian would be some help in this situation, but it only seems to complicate matters. In addition to everything my professors require, I have been given the general assignment of loving my neighbour. No word count. No due date. No grading criteria. Just love. How to prioritize? Do I worry about work or the great commission? Believe me, I've tried. And after hours of puzzling, I came up with just one thing: This is not what you ►







should be doing.

And maybe the voice is right this time. It seems reasonable that I shouldn't waste time just to worry about how I spend my time. If I'm going to squander brain power, I might as well use it on math. Who knows—it might even help me do some good someday. Somehow. I'm an optimist. And as such, I'm sure there's some message hidden in

this bout of self-examination. Maybe about doing what we can with the time we have.

Which makes me a little ashamed to admit I wrote this to avoid an English essay. ■

*Erin Woods is a regular contributor to the Record. She is in her second year of university.*

## BEGIN WITH NOTHING

Each day has enough troubles, so rejoice, always.

BY JOSEPH MCLELLAND

**Dear Erin,**

Welcome to Academia! You've found the right place for procrastination. There's even a name for it: "Student Syndrome." Like most of us engaged in studies, there's too much to do and too many deadlines to meet. It's an old story—Kierkegaard tells of the student who prepared for the intensive fall semester by taking the summer off. Something like the temperance worker whose incentive was a bottle of wine per day.

Psychologists, like most analysts, are divided on its causes. Some tell us it's a form of anxiety, others it's just sloth. It's the result of perfectionism—or of low self-esteem. It's a workaholic affliction, or maybe not. So really, you're on your own. Of course, there's time management, self-help books, and techniques of planning and performance. But let's face it, it's human nature to let tomorrow (*crastinus*) take care of itself. Composing essays or books is a daunting task—the trick is knowing when to quit research and start writing. One author said wisely, "You never finish a book, you just abandon it."

Students face the dilemma of demanding course loads and attractive extracurricular activities. Know something? So do professors. There's always more to read for our disciplines, and new demands for extra time. So there's a "Teacher Syndrome" too. (After a lifetime in academia I've learned at last to accept my limitations, making do with a few good questions to ponder and some tentative answers until I get to the heavenly Common Room where Truth will stand revealed.)

Now since we're both Christian maybe the problem lies elsewhere. The so-called "Calvinist work ethic" for instance—there's a happy thought! Although no Calvinist, John Wesley said: "Gain all you can and save all you can, that you may give all you can." That's heavy going, too serious a world-

view for most of us. But you don't have to be a perfectionist to recognize the truth in this approach. We believe that we are here by divine intention, to fulfill a role in "mending the world" as the Jewish saying goes. Here is the classic Reformation idea of vocation or "calling." Luther was strong on it, and Calvin: "The Lord commands us, in all the actions of life, to regard our vocation ... a post assigned us by the Lord, that we may not wander about in uncertainty all our days."

Oh, oh, I've just laid another burden on you, sorry! BUT: it's actually an easy yoke because Christ's work among us was to take away work out of work and make it play. It took me a while to get this—one of my first books was *The Other Six Days*, about work and property. Later I tried to balance it with *The Clown and the Crocodile*, about our calling to be the world's comedians faced with the monstrous (crocodilian-Leviathan) face of evil. Those demands that make you procrastinate can be arranged as penultimate matters because the ultimate truth is Good News.

So: Relax, Erin, each day has enough trouble (Jesus) so you might as well rejoice always (Paul). "What do you have that you did not receive?" Surely the answer is, "Nothing, that's why life's so funny!" So begin each day with nothing (a sort of Christian Zen?), and accept its tasks with a light heart and open mind. That's your vocation, and also your grace and your glory.

Yours,

Joe

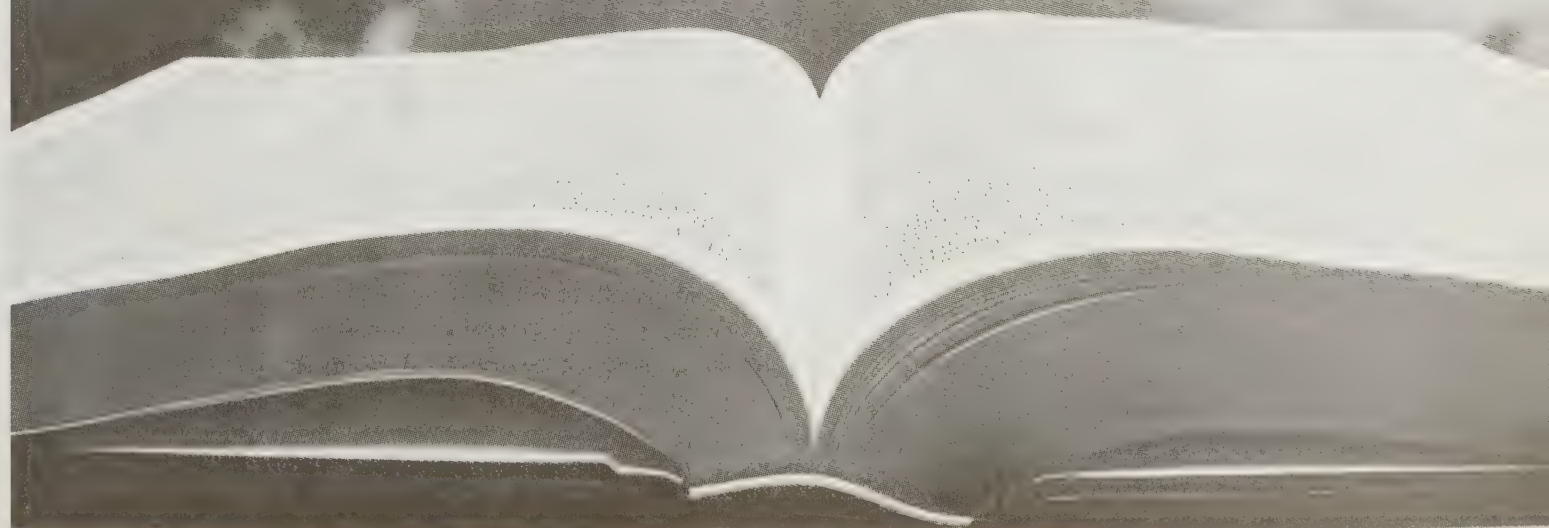
(P.S.: You've actually written a good essay; I'd give you an A minus.) ■

*Rev. Dr. Joseph McLelland is professor emeritus at Presbyterian College, Montreal. His latest collection of essays was reviewed in the June Record.*



# the politics of JESUS

Why are things wrong and how do we  
make them better? BY SAM WELLS





*“Rabbi, who sinned,  
this man or his parents,  
that he was born blind?”*

*John 9: 2*

**T**hink about that question for a moment. We like to imagine ourselves as enlightened people who don't play the blame game when it comes to misfortunes. But think about the way big disasters are reported on the news media. Day One, we get news of a big explosion or shoot-out or accident. People are interviewed as they wait to hear terrible news. Then we get tired of seeing people being frightened or in pain. So on Day Two we're told that questions are already being asked about how it was that the boat sank or the crazy man got hold of a gun or the security curtain was breached. And on Day Three the inquisition is in full swing and somebody's already under pressure to resign. 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, this man or the government, this man or the multinational corporations, that this man was born blind?' Somebody must be to blame. Stuff doesn't just happen.

The two answers that the disciples offer Jesus represent the two conventional ways of doing politics. The first answer is, this man sinned himself, and became blind as a result. This is the theory of personal responsibility. (We're told in the very first sentence of this story that the man had been blind from birth. So it's not clear what kind of sin the man could have committed in the womb to deserve being made blind.) It's obviously a limited theory, but that has never affected its popularity. If people are in trouble, tell them it's because they're lazy, tell

them it's because they're racially inferior, tell them to go figure, tell them it's because they made bad choices. Personal responsibility is what the politics of the right has always been essentially about.

But the disciples offer a second option to Jesus: the man's parents sinned. It wasn't his fault; it was someone else's. He was an innocent victim of other people's misdeeds. This is the conventional politics of the left. It's wrapped up in the jargon of structural evil, and the hissing noises that say the problem is the system. Just as the right seems to evacuate the stage of all other characters (the disciples, the parents, the neighbors and the Pharisees disappear out of the story leaving just the man and God), so the left crowds the stage with all these characters and more, meticulously and suspiciously plotting the economic dependence of one group on another, the vested interests of a third, the damaging effects of the Jerusalem sewage system that leads to infant blindness and the culpable neglect of the beggar's needs for dignity, opportunity and decent health care.

It's important for Christians to recognize that behind each of these two conventional political arguments is a rival theology, expressed in a rival view of sin. The first view tends to say the problem is humanity's fall. We were created free and in that freedom we always freely chose what was good. But when humanity fell we lost that ability. We retained the gift of freedom, the ability to choose, but we

lost the gift of goodness, the ability to choose well. The solution is to ask Christ to direct one's life and the Holy Spirit to empower one's will, so in St. Paul's words, it's no longer I who live, it's Christ who lives in me. Baptism marks the focal point of that transition from freedom to responsibility.

The second view by contrast is not so much interested in the fall. It tends to see humanity less as a sinner than as a child. For the left there isn't anything fundamentally wrong with the world, it's just that we need to do more research, offer more love, work out a better system, and agree on better rules to make sure everyone's innate goodness comes to the surface. We're all on a slow journey from ignorance to wisdom, and Jesus offers not so much a syringe to suck out our poison as a key to unlock our prison. Whereas the soft-focus movies of the right are about gang leaders turning to Jesus and becoming champions of troubled youth, or orphans pulling themselves up by their bootstraps and becoming global entrepreneurs, the poster children of the left are the teacher who loved a delinquent boy enough to see him go to college or the attorney who challenged the law that discriminated against the immigrant girl.

The irony is that the left believes, sometimes despite overwhelming evidence, in innate human goodness, but is associated with meddling taxation and legislation; meanwhile the right believes, just as surely, in sheer human sin, but is associated with leaving people alone in their wealth or poverty. ➤







This story of the blind man at the beginning of John 9, shows not only that our conventional political answers are elaborate responses to the problem of human suffering, but that it has always been so. Politics has always been theology. Behind every church policy, behind every relief program, behind every educational outreach ministry, behind every budget discussion, behind every

close to his ministry, so they know who he spends time with and who is closest to his heart. They stay close to his cross, or at least they should do, so they know the cost of his witness is terrifying. And they stay close to his resurrection, so they know that forgiveness is the way he unlocks the treasure store of the past and eternal life is the way he unlocks the limitless promise of the future.

nates his life, and the politics of Jesus is about new creation, touching the outcast and empowering for ministry, letting loose the energy pent up by despair, disadvantage and derision.

And then thirdly Jesus seems to find himself in the company of the Pharisees. And sometimes you know when you're getting something right, because the people that run things locally want to meet you and find

**We begin not with blame or with strategy but with worship. This is the first lesson of the politics of Jesus: there can be no justice unless there is right worship**

search for a new pastor, lies this same set of questions and possible answers: why are things wrong, and how do we make them better?

And this is the point where Jesus responds to his disciples' question. He starts with the unforgettable words: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him." Human suffering and disadvantage are fundamentally opportunities to discover the glory of God. We begin not with blame or with strategy but with worship. This is the first lesson of the politics of Jesus: there can be no justice and no righteousness unless there is right worship. Every time we go into a place of hardship or distress, whether our own or someone else's, we go expecting to be overcome with wonder at the glory of God.

It's sometimes said that politics shouldn't be about people, it should be about issues. But issues are simply generalizations about people. And there are three types of people surrounding Jesus in this story: At the beginning, Jesus is with his disciples. The politics of Jesus is about accountable communities who seek to imitate Jesus' pattern of life. They stay close to his incarnation, so they know the divine is revealed through the very human and the truly human is known only through the divine. They stay

Then most obviously Jesus is with the man born blind. The first sentence of the story doesn't include the word 'a.' It just says, Jesus saw "man, blind from birth." In other words, Jesus saw humanity, human-kind, the human condition. Jesus sees us but we can't see Jesus. That's the way the story begins. And Jesus mixes clay, just the way God formed Adam from the dust of the earth. God recreates humanity through Jesus. That's what this miracle is telling us. And Jesus puts the clay on the blind man's eyes. In Jesus, God touches our lives. That's what the story is saying. And Jesus tells the man to wash, or we may say be baptized. Jesus turns this man from a beggar into a missionary. That's what we see in this story. And then suddenly there's a commotion and everyone wants to know who and what and how and why. And the man simply says two words, "I am"—in Greek, *ego eimi*. The first words of all Jesus' famous sayings, and the very words God uses in Exodus 3 when Moses asks "What is your name?" I am. In other words, at the start of the story I was called humanity, but the only word for what has happened since is ... God.

So the politics of Jesus is with humanity, with the human condition, with the poor, with the beggar, with the person whose disability domi-

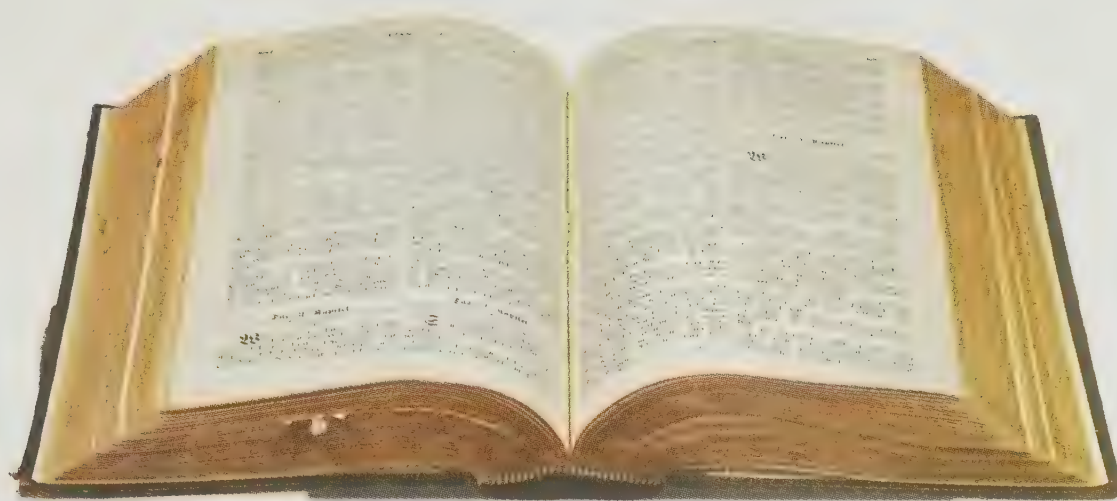
out more about you and see if you can be domesticated into their way of seeing and doing things. And if you can't or won't they'll doubtless make life difficult for you. So the poli-

tics of Jesus in this story is making people uncomfortable, people who believe God and society and health and propriety are theirs to judge and order and dictate.

And the irony of this story is that the person we thought we were going to pity and to patronize, the man born blind, turns out to be a better disciple than the disciples and a disarmingly disingenuous witness in the face of the powers. Don't miss the humor when the man says to the Pharisees, "Do you want to be his disciples, too?" He's making the disciples face up to their own timidity and the Pharisees face up to their own refusal to see. This isn't a hierarchical story in which the disciples come out best, the poor next, and the self-righteous nowhere. The disciples are embarrassed like the Pharisees. We're not supposed to see ourselves as the perceptive ones in this story. We're supposed to identify with "humanity", collectively personified in the man born blind. And the way to make sure we're not blind at the end of the story is to admit that we were blind at the beginning. ■

*Rev. Dr. Sam Wells was born in Canada, raised in England and is the Dean of Duke Chapel in North Carolina. This is slightly excerpted from a sermon he delivered at St. Andrew's, King St., Toronto, in March.*





# Warm & Caring

John Calvin's letters reveal a human and a faithful servant. BY JUDITH MACLEOD

**I**n our common Presbyterian understanding Calvin is a dominant but not a really sympathetic figure. We think of a lawyer-like preacher, a clear but rigid theologian, and an imposing but isolated man. We'd rather have coffee with Martin Luther.

Calvin was indeed a great preacher, theologian and Bible commentator, but he was not cold nor isolated. In fact he was a remarkable networker and could be a warm and caring, if strict, pastor, mentor and colleague. Nowhere do we see this more clearly than in his correspondence.

The extent and variety of Calvin's correspondence is remarkable, particularly in view of the fact that until the 1550s all letters were written in his own hand. "Some years ago,"

Charles de Jonviller (who transcribed his sermons) explained, "I saw that Calvin was almost overwhelmed with the labour of writing letters himself, without a secretary. I begged him to spare himself and said that his letters would be no less acceptable if he signed them himself, no matter who wrote them. He replied that he thought offence would be taken and he would be considered careless unless he wrote with his own hand. When I gave good reasons to the contrary, he gave way."

Calvin corresponded with men and women, with the highborn

and the lowly. To Protestant rulers of the day he was both challenging and encouraging. "Wherefore, sire, though I am aware that you have no need of my counsels," he wrote to Henry of Navarre in 1561, "yet

**Calvin corresponded with men and women, with the highborn and the lowly. To Protestant rulers of the day he was both challenging and encouraging**

I do not cease to entreat and even exhort you, in the name of God, to be pleased to take courage, in order to do combat courageously and more and more overcome all the difficulties with which I know you are





His concern for suffering and bereaved friends is apparent. After Viret had lost his wife he urges him to come to Geneva, and three years later confides in Viret his feelings of grief over the death of his own wife

surrounded."

He wrote with courtesy, tact and skill and was never self-seeking. It has been noted that he was less condescending to female correspondents than others of his day and, seeking to distance himself from John Knox's First Blast of the Trumpet Against The Monstrous Regiment of Women, even allowed in a 1559 letter to William Cecil, Secretary of State and Lord Treasurer of England, that some women rulers "had been raised up by the Providence of God."

Many of the doctrines emphasised in the Institutes are referred to in his letters, applying his principles in practical situations. He writes to a student, William Rabot, in 1550: "You must first of all give detailed submission to the will of the Lord, and in the next place, you must fortify yourself by His sacred doctrines ... draw from the fountain-head itself. For if you make a constant study of the Word of the Lord, you will be able to guide your life to the highest

excellence." Again in reply to what he regards as the mischievous questions of Laealius Socinius: "Nothing shall ever hinder me from openly avowing what I have learned from the word of God. It is my only guide and to acquiesce in its plain doctrines shall be my constant wisdom."

Calvin was passionate for truth and exasperated by what he regarded as cowardly hesitance. He reminded fellow reformer Melancthon: "What! are you ignorant today what numbers are held floating in doubts in consequence of the ambiguous manner of teaching to which you too timidly adhere?" But he was also concerned for unity. To his friend and colleague Farel he wrote: "Among Christians there ought to be so great a dislike of schism as they may always avoid it as it lies in their power."

His concern for suffering and bereaved friends is apparent. After Viret had lost his wife he urges him to come to Geneva, and three years later

confides in Viret his feelings of grief over the death of his own wife. "Mine is no common source of grief. I have been bereaved of the best companion of my life." But his friendship could include reproof as in the case of Farel's late, and as Calvin thought, impolitic marriage. Other letters show Calvin looking for houses and even for wives for his friends.

His letters also reveal his own spirituality. "I submit my will and my affections, subdued and held fast, to the obedience of God" he writes to Farel. Without this his advice would seem dictatorial and the elegant and polished phraseology, which reflect his background in Renaissance humanism, might appear hypocritical.

We are aware, however, that even when he seems harsh, Calvin is consistent. He applies the same standards to himself. He also relies on the same source of strength. In a self-revealing metaphor he writes to Farel: "Although we may be severely buffeted hither and thither by many tempests, yet, seeing that a pilot steers the ship in which we sail, who will never allow us to perish even in the midst of shipwrecks, there is no reason why our minds would be overwhelmed with fear and weariness." Let us be encouraged as were his contemporaries. ■

*Judith MacLeod, a graduate of Oxford University and Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, has taught at the Toronto French School and Tyndale Theological Seminary. She is both spouse and mother of ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.*

*This is an excerpted version of the full article, which can be found on our website.*

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# Married for a Wonderful Time

Reflecting on Thirty  
Years of Learning.

BY CALVIN BROWN

July 8th was my 30th wedding anniversary. On reflection, there are a lot of joys and laughter shared, sorrows endured and lessons learned. Three important lessons I've learned about a successful relationship in our marriage were all found in the Bible; but the experience of life makes the text come alive in a new way when life experience says, "That is so true!"

For example, Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:1-2, "Judge not that you be not judged. For with what judgement you judge you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you." I have found being gracious encourages grace, being

forgiving begets forgiveness and being helpful gets help in return. None of this happens out of mere duty; it is something that grows as love grows and the choices to serve are made daily.

The second lesson I learned is, don't minimize your own faults and need to change. The Bible tells us to take the log out of our own eye before we take the speck out of our neighbour's eye. Someone once speculated that probably in this Bible scenario

the faults may have been the same size but because the perspective was so up-close in the eye of the beholder it would look like a log. It points to the truth: it is easier to see other people's faults than to deal with our own, which seem much more challenging even though they may not be different than the ones others are facing. By minding our own business first—the business of living a holy life—we don't develop a critical ►





spirit about others. It doesn't mean we don't notice the fault in others, like our spouse, but it means we are aware that there is no place for self-righteousness because we all have

**It is best to be sure you are walking in the light before you try to "fix" your partner. I suspect you may never get to the fixing part**

sinned and fall short of God's glory. It is best to be sure you are walking in the light before you try to "fix" your partner. I suspect you may never get to the fixing your partner part!

The third thing I had to learn (and many minister types do) is that your spouse is not merely an extension of you but a person God has

created with his or her own gifts and calling to live out His purpose in life. Marriage makes us one but that one is the mysterious and glorious creation of God in whom we become one. It is

not one person lording it over another. I say this not because I want to get out of my responsibility of giving leader-

ship if that is what God mandates but as Paul points out we are to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. There is an intrinsic servanthood involved in Christian marriage because both spouses are servants of the Lord and the Lord gives both tasks and both are ultimately accountable to Him.

Even in Old Testament times, when we look in Proverbs 31 to see the model of the perfect wife, we see that in that household it seems she has taken the lead. Her husband is praised and becomes a city councillor because everyone thinks his choice of a wife makes him smart. I value my wife Phyllis for all that God has made her—unique and gifted—and maybe people think I'm a little smart because 30 years ago I picked her and we are still growing and discovering the fullness of life together. I at least think it was pretty smart.

Our church teaches that Christian marriage is a union in Christ whereby a man and a woman become one in the sight of God. It is the commitment of two people to love and to support one another faithfully for life (*Living Faith*). It is a great way to live. ■

*Calvin Brown is Executive Director of the Renewal Fellowship within the PCC.*

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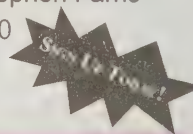
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# Holy Fear

God accommodates  
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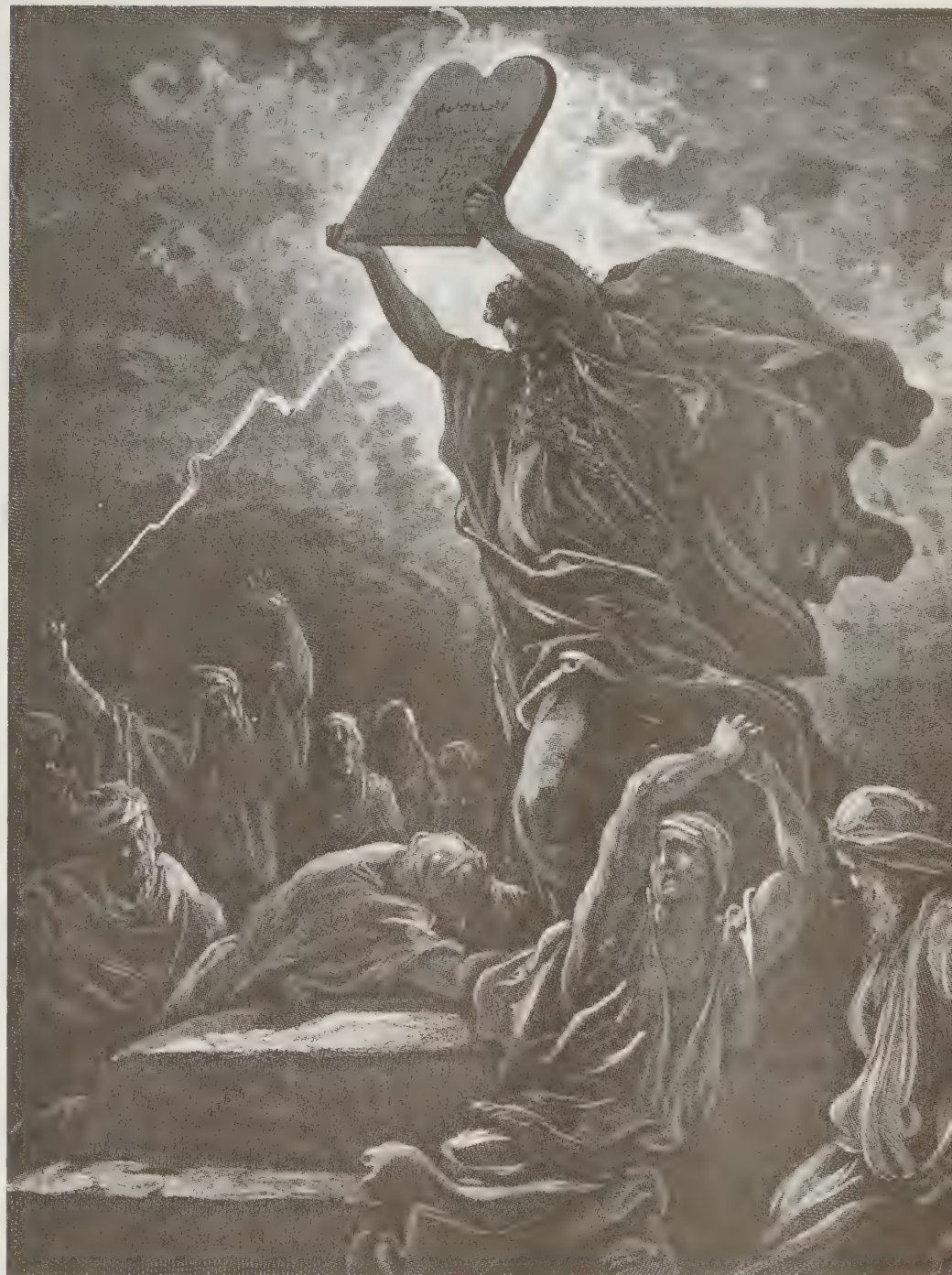
BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

October 5 (Worldwide Communion):  
Exodus 20:1-20 / Psalm 19

**W**e had a small Bible in our house when I was a child. It was cloth-covered, with a zipper. The picture on the cover was of Jesus and the children. The mothers of Salem stood in the background, in adoration. But that's not the picture I remember first. That one was inside: Moses, standing on a rock, towering over the people of Israel, holding the stone tablets high. Looking all of his 80 years. His eyes like glowing coals. I thought he was going to clobber them all with those slabs of granite.

This was my introduction to the Ten Commandments. When I had to memorize them for Sunday School, Moses stood over me, ready to drop the big rocks if I missed a beat. Fear isn't the best educational motivator, but it works. I still duck my head when I hear the Ten Commandments.

Fear is the problem many of us have with the Ten Commandments



today. Take the fear away, and anyone can follow them. Take the fear away, and you take the life out of the words.

The Israelites were already afraid. They asked Moses to stand between them and God. They knew they couldn't survive meeting God. Moses told them not to be afraid. God had come to fill them with holy fear, so they would become a godly nation.

Don't be afraid. God has come so you will have fear. Doesn't sound right!

I'm not a great fan of John Spong, but I think he got it right in his book

about the Ten Commandments. Fear is "a necessary part of the human covenant relationship with God."

We can live with the commandments if we admit there is a holy claim upon our lives, a demand upon our behaviour, "a mystical power present that we can never control, tame, or manipulate." Without this awe and wonder we can't say "we have experienced the biblical God." Yet holy fear is "foreign to our generation" (*Beyond Moralism: A Contemporary View of the Ten Commandments*, by Spong). ➤



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## PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

We Christians try to escape the fire on the mountaintop. We run into the New Testament. We hide behind Jesus, so when Moses lowers the boom, Jesus takes the hit for us. We speak as if Jesus' Father isn't the God who gave the commandments. But Jesus shows us how to love and obey this fearsome God.

Holy fear isn't the same as a child's fright at the picture of an old man, with fire in his eyes, holding two tombstones over his head, ready

{ We hide behind Jesus  
so when Moses lowers  
the boom, Jesus takes  
the hit for us

to bring them down hard. The closest comparison I can think of is the feeling we get when we realize that we are not in control of a situation. There's apprehension. There's also relief. And then the assurance that things will be okay, even if we can't see how, now.

I feel this fear at the Lord's Table. Wonder at the love. Amazement at the story. I feel small when I realize the greatness of the claim God makes on us at the table. Privileged to handle holy things, because we are holy in God's eyes. This is possible because, as John Calvin said, God accommodates God's self to us. God takes the initiative so we can enter God's presence and survive! God even calls us into partnership, in the gift called covenant.

God gives us gifts. Gifts like the Ten Commandments. All of God's gifts make claims on us. Call us to live worthy lives. God's greatest gift is the gift of God's self, accommodated to our life and our world, in Jesus.

Fear God, yes. Fear God, and come to the table, knowing that holy fear that drives away all reason to be afraid. ■

*Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe lives in Halifax.*





# Raining Relatives

Some praying and a lot of hope. BY PHIL CALLAWAY

**T**his past summer my wife's family had a reunion. I wasn't going to attend this year. I had other plans. Plans to go fishing. Plans for peace, tranquility and bass. When I shared my feelings with Ramona, she had some feelings of her own. "I grew up with these people," she said. "You go fishing and you might as well just take your parka and stay the winter." I decided to take her advice.

On Thursday night, the relatives began arriving. They came by the carload carrying large photo albums. There was hugging. Laughing. Picture-taking. And ... did I mention the hugging? We guys stood around talking about golf and the rainy weather.

Late that night, as darkness came down, the rain picked up. "Maybe we should call off the reunion," I suggested. "I think I hear someone building an ark."

"Very funny," said Ramona. I looked down. And noticed there were tears in her eyes.

Staring at the clouds, she reminded me of some things we'd been trying to forget. Expensive tickets for tomorrow night's Passion Play. An outdoor performance that a week of rain was washing away. "I've been looking forward to this

for months," she said. "I want my family to see this play so badly ... the story of Jesus ... His miracles ... His resurrection."

I didn't need to ask why.

A generation ago, Huntington's Disease had invaded her family, making death a way of life. The skies, once bright and blue, were clouded with uncertainty now.

**There was hugging. Laughing. Picture-taking. And ... did I mention hugging? We guys talked about golf**

One after another, three siblings had been diagnosed. "Only God knows how many reunions we have left ... down here," she said, taking my hand. "I want this one to be memorable." Then she prayed aloud for her brother Dennis, who lies in a nursing home. And for her two sisters who had come to the reunion, their bodies changed by this awful disease. And she prayed for sunny skies. I listened. But my faith was smaller than those drops of rain pelting the window.

Friday morning dawned warm and hot and sunny. ➤



In Florida. But where we live the rain was now a torrent. Four inches in two days. A record, someone said. Ramona prayed again at breakfast and at lunch. The skies opened wider. That afternoon

**They bolted him to a cross. The angels turned their backs. The crowd jeered and walked away. Then: he took the world by surprise**

we drove to the Royal Tyrell Museum, known worldwide for its huge collection of dead dinosaurs. For \$20 the whole family can view the remains and listen to lifeless speeches.

At six o'clock, as we exited the museum, the sun had poked through. Ramona didn't seem so surprised. "I knew it," she said, grinning.

A few miles from the dinosaur bones we sat in a natural amphitheatre, the sun warming our backs, our umbrellas unopened. For three hours only the sky held back. For three hours we watched the story of Jesus unfold. We saw Him offend the Pharisees. Laugh with children. Heal Mary Magdalene. And we watched in horror as they bolted him to a cross. The angels turned their backs. The crowd jeered and walked away.

Then: he took the world by surprise.

On either side of me sat my wife's two sisters. Women, who, along with their husbands and children, desperately long for healing. But it hit me

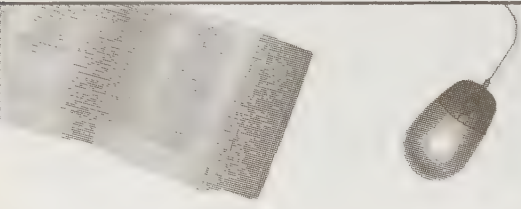
that night that they had something far better. They had hope. A hope you will not find in a museum filled with bones. But in a place where the tomb is empty. In the simple story of a passionate Savior who died to heal the world.

On the way home, the sky opened once again, and the rain descended. As I punched the cruise control a car passed us, its license plate bearing the one word that best summed up our day: HOPE.

"Look," I said. And Ramona did.


"You glad you didn't go fishing?" she asked, with a twinkle in her eye.

"I sure am," I said. "I'd choose a family reunion any day." Then I added, "Would you mind praying about tomorrow? I'd sure like to go golfing." ■



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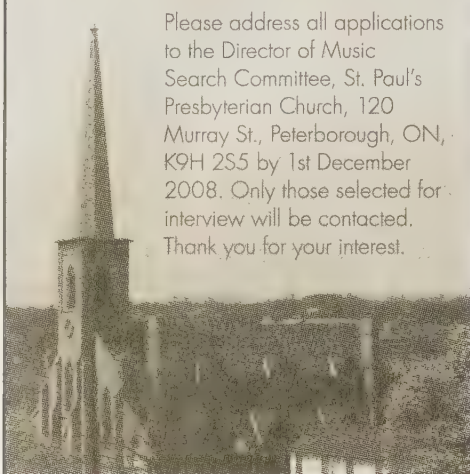
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# Getting Back to Shape

Reformed Churches in Eastern Europe are rebuilding.

BY REV. CHEOL SOON PARK

Many churches were at leisure over the summer months as members went away to cottages and other vacation destinations. Yet at the same time, many churches were busy organizing summer special mission projects such as youth camp, VBS, community projects and short term mission trips. Many groups from various regions went out as mission teams to share, serve, and build relationships with others. I believe they all came back with experiences they will cherish for the rest of their lives. I still have a vivid memory from my first mission trip. There I was shocked by the living condition of the people and learned a precious lesson—we have to share. The impact was so great I ended up going back on many other trips in following years.

Eastern Europe was the moderator's official trip for 2008. The PCC has built a strong relationship with the Reformed Churches in Hungary and Ukraine. This year we have extended our partnership with the Reformed Church in Romania. We have signed a mission covenant with them.

Karen and I went to Budapest, Hungary in July. We arrived there about nine hours later than our schedule due to the timely cancellation of the connecting flight. We had to take a train instead. We were tired yet very thankful to get there. Our friend Ron (Rev. Dr. Ron Wallace, Associate Secretary of International

Ministries) was already there yet they lost his luggage. I was not sure which case was worse. (They found his bags in Helsinki, Finland and brought them back two days later.) Every single mission trip has its own story.

We were very impressed by the challenging and proud history of the Reformed Church in the area. All three countries fell under Soviet Russia's invasion and suffered terribly. The government confiscated church properties. Hungarians have contributed so much to the survival of their church during this very difficult time. After the infrastructure of the society collapsed, churches took back the schools, hospitals and other properties. Most properties are damaged so badly, it will take much time and money to restore them. Yet I saw churches work hard and diligently.

Churches are getting back to shape. I was very impressed to see how eager they were to share and care, although they didn't have enough. They seemed to do more than we who live in abundance and comfort. After visiting many places, meeting with church officials, and talking with ordinary people, I was convinced God was in charge. He was doing great things with His people to restore justice and peace in the area.

I'd like to acknowledge the generous members of our church who gave to help brothers and sisters in the region. We have been working, through International Ministries and Presbyterian



World Service and Development, with members of the Reformed Churches in Romania, Hungary and Ukraine and I am confident that through your prayers and support, we will continue to work with these churches.

I owe an acknowledgement for the committed and devoted works of three missionaries of our own in the region. Mary Gorombey is working with the Reformed Church in Hungary. She is working for the refugees in the country and her co-workers regard her as a wonderful and hard working servant. David Pandy-Szekeres is working with the Reformed Church of Sub-Carpathian Ukraine. He is truly a multi-talented servant. His three young children are also junior missionaries, not to mention his wife Anna. Brian Johnston is an English and music teacher working with the Theological Seminary of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Romania. They really set a wonderful example for us. I'd like to ask you for continuous prayer and support. Mission work is the main reason of our own existence. We all should either send or be sent. Let us participate and make the difference. God is calling us all to his mission. ■

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Cheol Soon Park'.

Rev. Cheol Soon Park



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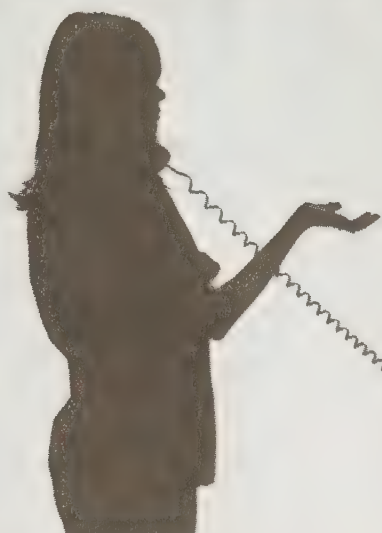
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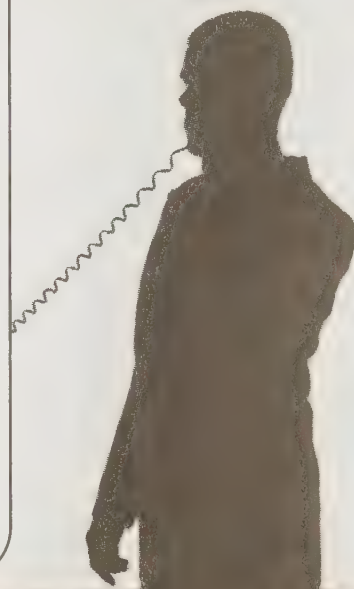
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# Called to Wonder

## Instructions

- Each line of the puzzle below has one word hidden in it.
- Fill in the blank space with a missing letter that belongs to that word and cross it off the *LETTER LIST* found at the bottom of the page.
- Each correct word has five or more letters in it.
- You will not always need all of the letters in the row to make the word.
- The letter you add may be at the beginning, at the end, or somewhere in the middle of the word.
- When completed you will be able to read two words down the centre squares of the puzzle. Fill these words into the blanks in the story above the puzzle, from Matthew 22, verses 35 to 40.



People often went looking for Jesus to ask him questions.  
One day a well-educated person asked:

**"Teacher, in the law, which is the**

**?"**

*Matthew 22, verses 35 to 40*

## Words to Live by!

H	L	O	V	I	N		R	N	A	L	X	H
E	E	E	H	E	A		T	E	Z	R	G	U
F	O	R	G	I	V		N	E	S	S	N	Z
S	B	T	N	P	E		C	E	L	U	T	K
R	A	S	E	G	S		R	E	N	G	T	H
T	Y	M	V	O	B		D	I	E	N	C	E
G	E	Y	O	U	R		E	L	F	T	L	A
S	J	O	F	A	I		H	Q	U	E	D	I
L	R	E	S	P	E		T	R	I	N	T	C
N	E	I	G	H	B		U	R	T	F	X	P
U	Y	R	E	M	E		B	E	R	I	N	G
I	V	K	P	R	I		A	R	Y	C	L	D
X	D	H	R	E	L		T	I	O	N	S	J
S	W	C	D	C	O		S	T	A	N	T	K
E	R	D	W	I	S		O	M	G	P	U	A
G	U	V	A	N	T		I	S	S	I	O	N
D	R	Z	R	U	L		S	G	F	P	P	O
P	T	N	I	H	O		E	S	T	Y	B	D
U	N	D	E	R	S		A	N	D	I	N	G



For the Journey, continued from page 50

nasty end is facing towards you so that you can't see their glowing eyes, the first thing you know that they are even there is the sound of your Smart Car becoming a moose suppository. At times like this size really does matter. You have got to be aware of the hazards and be properly

## Size really does matter. You have got to be aware of the hazards and be properly equipped to drive the Cariboo roads

equipped to successfully handle driving the Cariboo roads, especially in the fall and winter, particularly in the dark. Otherwise you can end up looking real dumb, or dead.

It strikes me that it's like this with following Christ too. You have got to be aware of the hazards and properly equipped to successfully handle going down the road with Jesus. The New Testament writers want us to know the hazards. Jesus Christ is in the middle of a conflict with the world's darkness, with its sin and evil, and if we journey with him seeking his justice and peace in the world, we can't help but be in the middle of his conflict. This is a major theme in the New Testament.

Peter knew this perhaps more than anybody; particularly at the time the first Epistle that bears his name was written. He had come up full against the political and religious authorities of a world bound by darkness and bad news, to which he had to proclaim the liberating good news of Jesus Christ. The people to whom 1 Peter is addressed had come up against it too. And so 1st Peter teaches how to go about properly equipping one's self to handle following Jesus: "So roll up your sleeves, put your mind in gear, be totally ready to receive the gift that's coming when Jesus arrives. Don't lazily slip back into those old grooves of evil, doing just what you feel like doing. You didn't know any better then; you do now. As obedient children, let yourselves be pulled into a way of life shaped by God's life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness. God said, 'I am holy; you

be holy.'" (1 Peter 1:13-16)

And now I think I understand something about the purpose of holiness. Holiness has to do with being properly equipped to live in the wild and woolly world with Christ, seeking his peace with justice there, particularly in the dark places. I have to be honest and admit that most often I don't take holiness very seriously.

The Word of God certainly does. I want to live in the world, to be fully of the world, to live according to the standards my society teaches or at least allows. The Word of God wants me to live in the world but to not be of it, to live according to the standard that God teaches. God wants me to be in the world but to be set apart for him as I live in it, "to let myself be pulled into a way of life shaped by God's life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness." In the Bible, holiness of course means to live a pure or godly life, but it means more than just that. James Muilenberg in one of his etymological studies suggests at least two associations for the Hebrew word holy, namely "separation" and "brightness." God's standards for living and the world's standards are not often the same. There is an inherent tendency towards darkness in a world distorted by sin. And there is an inherent hazard in living for God in the world, to be blazing light in the all-too-often consuming darkness. How do I take on this hazard?

The Bible is wonderfully practical, full of grace-filled instructions. From the Old Testament through the New, God's people are continually given pragmatic standards for lives shaped by God, lives "energetic and blazing with holiness." To this end, Moses leads God's people to a mountain and they are given a word of God, Torah—God's instructions for living. It comes in the form of commandment, ordinance and holiness code. God puts a nub on all of this when he summarizes, "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2). To the

same end, more than a millennium later, the Word of God takes on flesh and Jesus leads his followers to a mountain. They are given a word of God, instructions for living, the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Jesus puts a nub on all of this when he summarizes, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). The continuity in these two grace-filled moments of instruction leaves me thunderstruck.

And so, time after time I am driven back to these two sections of God's Word to ponder them. And in pondering Torah and Sermon on the Mount, I realize that there is something here for me, something at once very spiritual, practical and equipping. Certainly the instructions have to be hammered out to fit my time and place, done in terms of the spirit of the law if not the letter of it, done under the guidance of the Holy Spirit who inspires both the writing and my hearing. But if I am to live in the world and not of it as Jesus prays that I would (John 17:13-19), if I am "to let myself be pulled into a way of life shaped by God's life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness," here is where I need to be in order to be properly equipped. For me to turn my back on these biblical places of instruction, as I so often do, amounts to driving through the moose pasture of the Cariboo in winter darkness in a Smart Car.

Like the Psalmist, I need to be in the Torah and Sermon on the Mount in a contemplative way, masticating like a bear sucking marrow from bones, not in search of some kind of overly simple life-starving legalism, but of succulent life-giving instructions and principles for living. Indeed, "How well equipped are those who do not walk according to the advice of the wicked, nor take a stand with sinners, nor sit with scoffers; but their delight is in the Torah/Instructions of the Lord, and on these they meditate day and night." (Psalm 1:1-2, author's paraphrase) ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry.*





# Properly Equipped

A Smart Car is not the best tool for a wintry mountain road. BY DAVID WEBBER

Last October, we were driving home from our house church in Williams Lake on a Sunday afternoon. Just before we got to our turnoff on Highway 97, just before the infamous 127 Mile corners, two brand new Smart Cars came up behind us and passed us. They must have been doing at least 120 kilometres per hour because we were sifting along pretty fast ourselves. Each car was painted with logos of several different sponsors. Their little motors were screaming as they passed us on their way to some promotional event. Each driver seemed to be pumping on the pedals for all he was worth. And they were travelling about three Smart Car lengths apart too, which is really close.

Now about this time, Rodney the moose wandered out onto the highway right at the corners. Rodney is all bull, huge in body and in horn. He's normally secretive so we don't see him much all year, and he is normally discreet with his "affairs" so we don't see him much

even during October's rutting season. We could see a long way ahead of us because of the corners, enough to see Rodney walk with great purpose out of the bush, across the right-of-way and directly onto the middle of the road. The racing Smart Cars were down in the pocket of the corner and couldn't see him like we could.

All of sudden the two Smart Cars climbed out of the pocket, rounded the corner and there was ole Rodney. The brakes went on and horns honked furiously. Rodney turned to face whatever it was that was challenging his male rutting dominance (at least I hope that was what he was doing because the other alternative is really scary) and when he saw the pair of charging Smart Cars he put his head down to face them. Somehow the Smart Cars stopped just before they found themselves on the horns of a real dilemma, which was at least twice their size and now shaking said horns as if to say, "Come on boys, let's get 'er done." Rodney stood

his ground and little yellow backup lights could be seen at the rear of each Smart Car as the operators desperately rummaged around the gearbox looking for reverse. Rodney turned and sauntered off the road.

I don't know what was going on in the wee Smart Cars right about then, nor what it smelled like, but in our three-quarter-ton pickup truck we all breathed a healthy sigh of relief. Chelsea put it best when she later said, "If they call them Smart Cars how come you look so dumb racing one of them down the Cariboo highway?"

And that's the point of telling this story. A Smart Car, at least in my humble opinion, leaves a person really ill equipped to handle what goes on in the moose pasture that is the Cariboo highway. This is true at any time of year, but particularly in winter, especially at night. On dark winter nights, moose like to stand in the middle of the road on the black pavement, and if their

continued on page 49



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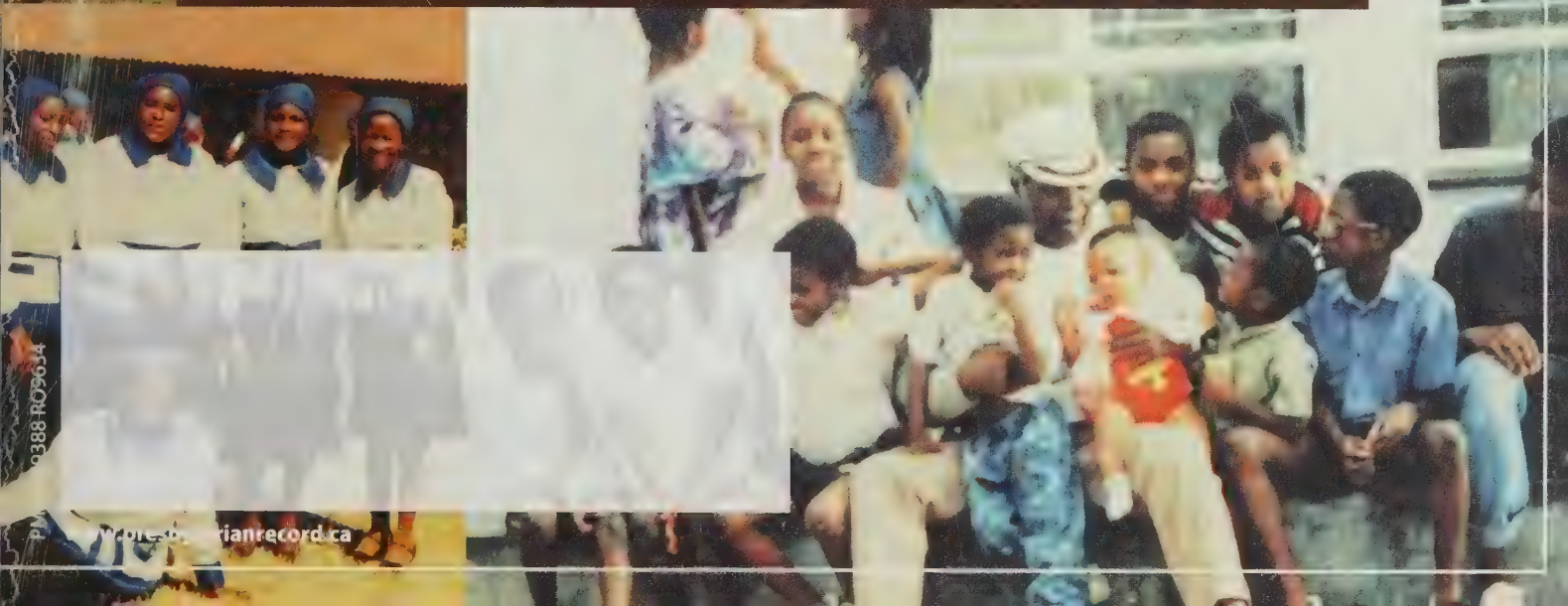
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NOVEMBER 2008

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## A COLONIAL LIFE



### On the Cover

Family photos courtesy of Margaret Zondo and family





# BREADBASKET TO BASKET CASE

Zimbabwe is one more example of the West's abandonment of Africa. BY DAVID HARRIS

I look at a piece of Zimbabwe almost every day. The slightly abstract mother and child carved in black springstone radiate extraordinary love and tenderness and is probably my most cherished piece of art gathered from foreign reporting.

But like so much about Zimbabwe, it creates mixed feelings, because I recently discovered that the internationally known sculptor, David Mutasa, who has exhibited at the Smithsonian, ran for President Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party twice (he was defeated in the 2008 spring elections) and stands accused of doling out grain rations from the family mill only to Mugabe supporters.

Reading Margaret Zondo's account of growing up in Zimbabwe in this issue brought back many memories of my only visit to that country a decade ago to cover the 8th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

About 15 years before, in my 1983-84 seminary year, I first heard about the atrocities carried out under Mugabe's rule.

The dean of Harare's Anglican cathedral, John Da Costa, was visiting the parish I was assigned to. At one presentation, he asked any journalists present to leave because he feared publicity about what he had to say would jeopardize more lives.

Fortunately, I had not yet taken up this career and so I listened, stunned like everyone else, about the infamous Fifth Brigade, a group of terrorist soldiers, who raped and butchered thousands of men, women and children, sometimes piling them into mass graves.

It was part of Mugabe's war, both tribal and political, against rival Joshua Nkomo, himself a terrorist.

Things worsened over the years. As Zondo notes, Zimbabwe's economic turmoil makes the current rattling of world banks and stock markets seem like a placid sea. In Zim, as it's fondly known, inflation now runs in the millions of per cent each year.

In this fertile, stunningly beautiful country, bread (if you can find it) costs one price when you enter the supermarket and another when you get to the checkout.

Zimbabwe has gone from being the breadbasket to the basket case of Africa.

The human numbers are overwhelming. In a population of 11 million, a quarter of adults have HIV/AIDS. The median age has plummeted to 18, with life expectancy at birth of 45.

Canada's median age, by contrast, is 40 with life expect-

tancy of 82.

About 80 per cent of the population is unemployed and living below the poverty line.

About the only bright spot is that the country's infrastructure of airports, roads, railways and phone lines was well enough built that perhaps it can be rehabilitated if and when Mugabe disappears from the political scene. Unfortunately, civil war is also possible.

Zimbabwe is yet another example of the West's abandonment of Africa. Having (in large measure, successfully) plundered both the continent's people and natural resources before it became clear to Europe's colonial powers, weakened after two world wars, that ruling from afar just wasn't possible.

With culpable negligence, those same powers and the industries they supported utterly failed to reasonably educate the indigenous population. White Western powers left abruptly, leaving political vacuums that sucked pre-existing tribal conflicts into the vortices of violence we still have today.

U.S. foreign policy blanks out at the eastern edges of the south Atlantic; Europeans still barely tolerate each other, let alone help others, and smaller countries like Canada seem simply not to care.

The situation across Africa is not unlike Yugoslavia under Tito. Once the iron fist is removed, long-simmering disputes erupt in violence. But the West eventually moved in to deal with Kosovo.

Not Africa. Not Rwanda. Not the Congo. Not Darfur. Not Somalia (with the exception of a bungled U.S. foray). Not Zimbabwe.

Yet as Andrew Faiz points out in his column this month, we have a shared humanity—humanity that arose in Africa, let's not forget. Our lack of commitment to sub-Saharan Africa in particular is like ignoring a gangrenous limb. Amputate it, and the body is mutilated; fail to treat it and it poisons the whole body.

Jesus and Paul both taught us to see God's face in every human being. To recognize we are part of one body. The global indifference towards Africa is appalling. We ought to be ashamed. I wonder why we are not? ■





# Letters

letters@presbyterianrecord.ca



## Sincere search

*Re Repent Repent Repent, September*

I think a sincere search of one's heart will always find something we can improve on—we have not achieved perfection yet.

Mr. Faiz should have stuck with the need to repent when he felt a pull at his heart by the Holy Spirit. Instead he was persuaded by pride to rationalize it away. Jesus was the only one who did not have to repent.

BUD CRAIG, OTTAWA

## The P in PCC, cont'd

I am deeply saddened by Robert Ewing's misguided and hurtful remarks, in the September *Record*. I am one of those who has been fortunate enough to have taken my MDiv at Tyndale Seminary, and then to have attended Presbyterian College, under the very generous and grace filled leadership of all of the staff there.

Both experiences were very valuable to me in developing the breadth of my ecumenical heart and mind, and for preparing me for ministry in our broadly Reformed denomination.

At Tyndale I was taught by excellent Presbyterian professors (as well as Reformed Baptists, and many others). As a student I rubbed shoulders with Catholics, Mennonites, Christian Reformed, Greek Orthodox, as well as Baptists, Brethren, Pentecostal, and other denominations.

Am I at a disadvantage from this experience? Not at all. It has taught me to listen closely and then to disagree in grace with those I don't see eye to eye with; but always, in this, to still

hold our Reformed understanding of Scripture with integrity.

When I went to Presbyterian College I was formed for ministry alongside of people studying to be United Church and Anglican ministers, again learning to speak the truth as I have come to understand it in my journey of faith, in love. (Maybe many who write into our magazine need to learn to do the same.)

Truth ... Am I any less a Presbyterian than my peers in my actions and the way that I conduct worship on a Sunday morning? The congregation I serve seems very happy with our blend of very traditional Presbyterian worship, as well as more contemporary songs (I am deeply gladdened that our youth and young adults have been very involved in this ministry).

I am deeply committed to the scriptural virtues of love and unity, and I am deeply committed to pour out my life in service to Christ, through serving our church, this part of Christ's Church, in our time in history.

I do agree our church should be "Reformed and Reforming according to the Word of God." That being said, I might not agree with Ewing's social views based on my understanding of Scripture (or those of Derrick Cunningham also in September's *Record*), but does that make me any less a Presbyterian, or does that make me any less able to help lead our Church into the future? I certainly hope not.

TIMOTHY FERRIER, CHESLEY, ONT.

I am one of those ordinands who graduated from Tyndale and then went into ministry in the PCC. I ➤

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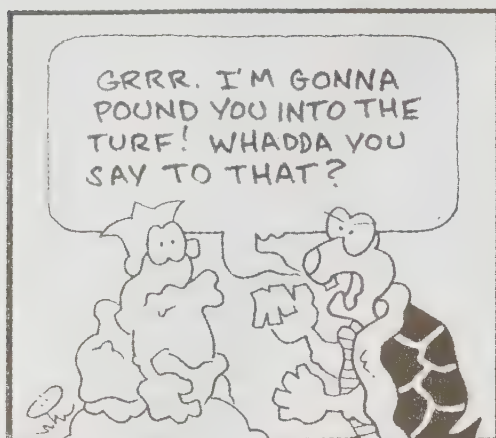
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## Pontius' Puddle



## PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

## 2008 Annual Appeal

... building up the Presbyterian Church

Dear Reader:

I want to remind you about the *Presbyterian Record's* annual financial appeal—and tell you some exciting news about the production of this magazine.

First, I hope you have had a chance to make a donation to the *Record*. It's fully tax-deductible. If you haven't or you have misplaced your appeal envelope package, it's as easy as going online to [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca) and clicking on the Donate Now button in the upper right-hand corner.

Secondly, this issue of the *Record* is "greener" than any previous issue! Beginning this month, your *Presbyterian Record* (with the exception of the covers) is being printed on paper made entirely from recycled materials—paper, cloth, felt, etc. We're doing our best to be environmentally responsible and we hope you'll be pleased with this decision.

But we need your help! This paper costs more than ordinary newsprint made from pulpwood—Canada's trees.

Please give generously today and support a green *Record*.  
Thank you!



David Harris  
Publisher & Editor

would like to point out that I know of no one who gets an "ordination of convenience" in the PCC. The process I had to go through was akin to starting over from the beginning. Even though I had done my M.Div. at Tyndale, (which incidentally has a large number of influential Presbyterian ministers serving as professors on staff) and had done my undergrad work at Redeemer College (an institution of Reformed thinking par excellence!) I still had to go through all the hoops, guidance conferences, and take 16 courses (two years) at Knox College. (Which incidentally has professors from other denominational backgrounds.) In many of the course I took I had already done the equivalent, or more, at Tyndale. I would hardly call this a convenient course to ordination, but an important one in getting to know the denomination I serve.

That is why I find it ironic that the author laments the demise of the historic traditional Presbyterian Church. Does the author really wish to go back to the time when Knox College flourished under the clear reformed theological vision of Bryden? Those whom I know in the Renewal Fellowship have more in common with Bryden than they do with the kind of biblical fundamentalist which the author tries to link them with.

I think there have been times in our past when we were more confident and sure of what it meant to be reformed—but these would bear no similarity to the picture the author paints of his under-



standing of being Reformed and the historic Presbyterian Church. When in our traditional history have we been debating the issue of allowing homosexuality a normative status in the church? We must be careful that we do not use *semper reformanda* as a catch phrase to justify capitulating to our social context. The reformers (William Tyndale among them) understood "always reforming" to mean always examining church tradition and secular society by the standards of scripture and rejecting whatever did not measure up. I see the Renewal Fellowship and their efforts as an attempt to follow in the reformers footsteps, evaluating our church and culture from a perspective which takes neither a liberal or literalist view of scripture. The question is not if our church is recognizable historically, but whether it can correctly handle the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). That is what we want.

REV. GRANT GUNNINK, CALGARY

## Youth Issue Online

There is a wonderful article—A Connection to God by Elana Gritzan—on your September website, about the mission trip to Cape Breton. This highlights an experience for youth and adults enjoying what God can do for others through us and also experience what God gives us through different expe-

riences. It also highlights bridging the age gap as well as cultural. The youth need to be encouraged to take a greater part in congregational life and this article may spark interest in other congregations and Presbyteries to undertake mission work involving youth and adults.

THERESA GLITHERO, VIA EMAIL

**Editor responds:** It is a wonderful article and follows-up on the story told in *Sharing Their Gifts* by Mavis Currie in the September issue.

I noticed that my name and image are attached to an article in the September issue—*Gifts and Talents*—that I did not write. The body of the article was written by my co-worker at Camp Geddie, Amanda Henderson. She did an excellent job, and I will send her the cheque I received in the mail! Just wanted to give you a heads up.

LAURA BLAIKIE, VIA EMAIL

**Editor responds:** Thanks for the correction Laura and our apologies to Amanda. The only fair thing to do is for us to send another payment to Camp Geddie and as a team you can decide how best to spend the two cheques. (Which, because we are a struggling church publication, amounts to a few token dollars in appreciation of the efforts made by our talented and gracious authors.) ■

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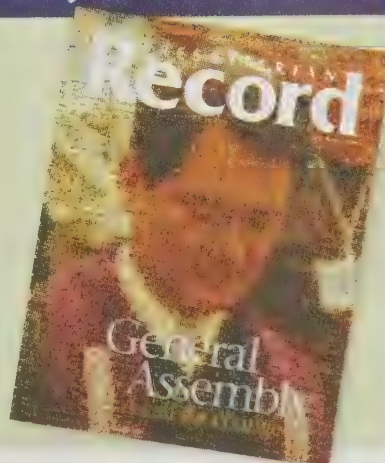
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# People & Places

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Please visit the monthly PnP page at [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca) for more.



William Langille is shown with his family holding his great grandmother Marie Smith's water pitcher after his Baptism and Confirmation at St. John's, Pugwash, N.S., on Aug. 11. On our website also from the same pastoral charge: 128th anniversary at East Lake, 180th anniversary at Wallace, 82nd anniversary at Tatamagouche and a 52nd wedding anniversary also at Tatamagouche.



Over its 40 years, Bridlewood, Scarborough, Ont., has raised over \$2.5 million for missionary ministries all over the world. During the 1980s this church sponsored and shepherded 700 boat people from South Vietnam. Revs. Jack Archibald, Chris Carter, Gordon Kouwenberg and George Robertson have been the ministers. And, in April, at its 40th anniversary, Rev. John Vissers was the guest preacher.



That's Rev. Dr. Stephen Hayes, of St. Andrew's, Quebec City, on the far left; and the clerk of session Gina Farnell on the far right. In between them are nine of the 11 new (yes, New!) members who joined in June. Bienvenue! Voici votre église. Nous vous attendons. Front Row: Patrick Johanson, Matthew Sanheim, Erinn Johanson, Nicholas Sanheim. Back Row: Nancy Lease, Sheryl and Matthew Hatvany, Trevor Johanson, Erik Johanson. Absent: Marietta Freeland and Christopher Coetzee.





The goal, set in 2007 by the Mission's Committee of St. Andrew's, Galt, Ont., was to raise \$5,000 to sponsor a well in Darfur, Sudan. In May, St. Andrew's gave Presbyterian World Service and Development a cheque for \$15,000 for three wells. What happened? Mission happened! Last August there was a Walk For Water fundraiser, where folks walked around Galt from 7pm to 7am. They raised \$10,000. They were so energized by that event, they had another fundraiser this year, to top their top effort. More photos on our website.



Jack and Betty Turvey are shown with the model they created of their church, Elmwood Avenue, London, Ont. The model is being used in a fund raising campaign for the new church roof, and over the past two years the board of managers has raised over \$9,000 by selling shingles for the model's roof.

### On our website:

Anniversaries galore at a pastoral charge in N.S.; 111 years of Chinese Presbyterian in Montreal, proving there's nothing new about multiculturalism; two 100th anniversary articles from Knox, Cochrane, Ont.; endless cuteness with angels, lambs, caterpillars and butterflies in Gale, Ont.; a 100th anniversary book from Grace, Calgary—orders yours now!; 50 years of Ingleside, Ont.; three newish elders at Mt. Pleasant, Ont.; a new sound system in Argyle, Ont.; the Teeswater, Ont., youth group goes shopping for Evangel Hall; an instant baby boom (triplets) in Killam, Alta.; a neighbourhood dinner mission at Laurel Lea St. Matthew's, Sarnia, Ont.; a Sunday school picnic in St. Arthur; St. Andrew's, Victoria archivist awarded by the City of Victoria



*People and Places* entries published in the magazine are chosen through a monthly lottery. However, many submissions prove themselves unpublishable on a technical level. Every effort is made each month by the PnP Editor to get better photos—not too dark, not too light, with ample digital information. Before submitting please read the essay **How To Submit Photos In A Digital Age** found on the People and Places page of [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca).





**Mission to Mexico:** Before they could build nine houses in Tijuana, Mexico in July, this group from Durham, Ont., first had to raise \$14,000 so they could afford to be missionaries in Mexico. They were enterprising to say the least; and, really know how to carry a pink hammer. Back row: Stephan Smit, Ron MacIntyre, Jared McConnell. Middle row: Shannon Becker, Ané Smit, Caitlyn Osborne, Nicole Vander Meulen, Emily Hutchinson, Sam Becker, Mary Buller (honourary Canadian from Colorado). Front row: Rev. Jim Johnson, Linda Johnson, Kathleen McConnell.

# Vacant offices filled

Carmichael to lead church communications. BY CONNIE PURVIS

WEB GURU Colin Carmichael joined the Life and Mission Agency this October as Associate Secretary, Communication and Resource Production, a position which has been vacant for almost a year.

Prior to his appointment, he served for two years as a member of the church's internet advisory committee which was disbanded last year following the departure of the former associate secretary.

"I want to improve the communication infrastructure and allow congregations and presbyteries to get in touch with each other ... to improve sharing and collaboration," he said.

Earlier this summer he launched the *Cambridge Reporter*, an online newspaper that publishes stories written by the community. "It's the kind of collaboration and discussion that you can only get online," Carmichael said. "If I can take some of the lessons I learned [at the *Reporter*] and apply them to the PCC, that would be great."

Carmichael has been working in the internet field for almost 10 years, most recently with Social Media Group in Dearborn, Michigan.

In his new position, he is responsible for communication activities within the church. This includes the creation and circulation of the PC Pak and PCC emails which are sent out to congregations monthly. Carmichael currently serves as an elder at Central, Cambridge, Ont.

Susan James also joined national offices this September, replacing Bella Lam as Presbyterian World Service and Development's Africa and Middle East program co-ordinator.

She most recently worked at the University of South Florida coordinating international public health, medicine, and nursing programs. She has also worked in various missions in Africa.

"I've always had a strong passion and interest in Africa," James said. "I'm thrilled to have this job." ■



# Celebrating Young Lives

Two prominent funerals add challenges. BY CONNIE PURVIS

THIS SUMMER, Rosedale and Bonar-Parkdale, both in Toronto, conducted widely publicized funerals for murdered youth. Oliver Martin, 25, one of two young men who were shot outside a friend's condominium, was buried from Rosedale while Katelynn Sampson, 7, was found in the home of her caregivers, just a few blocks from Bonar-Parkdale, where she was remembered.

"I've done funerals for children before and they're always difficult. But ... this one was done because of murder and violence perpetuated against a child," said Rev. Harry Klassen who presided at Sampson's funeral.

Over 800 people attended each service. In accordance with the families' wishes, the media were barred from entering the churches, but the streets outside were awash with cameras.

A nearby funeral home hosted Sampson's visitation. As was widely reported, the girl's body still bore marks of abuse, but according to Klassen her emaciated state was more striking than the bruises.

"Katelynn's middle name was 'Angel' and I reminded people that in the scriptures that means 'messenger' and she had a message for us," said Klassen. That message was a call to end violence, drug abuse and child abuse, and it was widely quoted by Toronto newspapers. Klassen said he was glad that the message was disseminated, but his homily encompassed more than angels. He spoke about the kingdoms of life and death. "The part that they [the media] liked and wanted to stress was that Parkdale is a community where this is a problem that needs to be dealt with," he said.

Sampson's family was connected with Bonar-Parkdale through a "break-



fast club" outreach program which her biological mother attended frequently.

Although Bonar-Parkdale is able to seat 1,000, at Rosedale measures were taken to accommodate attendees who overflowed the sanctuary. A large screen and two televisions assisted those inside the church, and a sound system provided audio for about 300 people who were forced to remain outside.

In accordance with the family's wishes, Martin's funeral did not seek to make a political statement, but was instead a time to celebrate the young man's life. "I made sure it was as inclusive a worship service as possible," said MacLellan. It did not pass without misunderstandings.

"The family asked for What A Wonderful World (by Louis Armstrong) to be sung," MacLellan said. "So we put it out on the big church sign—What a Wonderful World—and we had many telephone calls asking that we remove it because it wasn't sensitive to the family."

Despite phone calls and concerns, the service concluded with the song in an original four-part harmony arranged by the music director. "That was his [Oliver's] favorite song," said MacLellan. "And the family didn't want to take it away from him."

Police investigations are ongoing in both murder cases. ■

## BUILDING HOPE

**Five years ago, Laura, a young mother of four, first brought her youngest child to Flora House's Learning and Play Program.**

Later her two oldest were enrolled in the after-school program and now all four attend. She realized that in order to help her children, she needed to improve her own education, so

returned to school and obtained her Grade 12. After this, she enrolled in an Aboriginal-run program to earn her Paraprofessional



**WICM**

(Teacher's Aide) Diploma. Laura was employed at Flora House this past summer assisting with the summer day program for children. She is presently working in schools and encouraging all children to work to their fullest potential. Laura has become a life-long learner.

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# Tales of Taiwanese churches

Shifting demographics in Vancouver and Toronto.

BY CONNIE PURVIS

**BURNABY**—The Presbytery of Westminster recognized Burnaby Taiwanese, which began as a mission and preaching point of Vancouver Taiwanese, as a stand-alone congregation in January.

The fledgling congregation was planted in celebration of VTPC's 20th anniversary, and had been meeting steadily since September 2007. It has flourished, with over 100 people attending worship each Sunday.

The past several years have seen dramatic shifts in the Taiwanese population as large numbers of immigrants return to Taiwan. According to Rev. Chinchai Peter Wang, the VTPC's former minister who advocated founding the new congregation, in 2000 there were 70,000 to 80,000 Taiwanese people living in Greater Vancouver, but by 2007 the number had dropped to 35,000.

Despite this trend, Burnaby Taiwanese' attendance has grown consistently, which has posed difficulties as the current facilities are becoming too small to adequately serve the congregation's needs.

According to Wang, Burnaby is well placed to serve the Taiwanese community. "Burnaby does not have the highest Taiwanese population, but it is centrally located," he said.

At the time of Burnaby's founding, "VTPC was the only Presbyterian Church in Greater Vancouver worshipping in Taiwanese," said Ruth Chueh, the clerk of session at VTPC. "Some people did not want to travel the long distance to a church especially in an unfamiliar environment." VTPC is on the west side of Vancouver. Sharing a building with the English speaking

Brentwood congregation, Burnaby is accessible to Taiwanese immigrants who settled in the suburbs and other areas on Vancouver's east end.

The new church actively promoted itself through a number of channels including television and newspaper ads, bazaars and hiking groups. "There is warmth in the church," Wang said. "Worship is lively and preaching is related to the lives of new immigrants."

The new church faces some challenges, said Bruce Cairnie, the interim moderator. The congregation must seek a mission beyond that which was entrusted to them as a VTPC mission, and they have to acquaint themselves to the culture of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. "They're learning about it as they go," he said.

After 14 years at VTPC, Wang returned to Taiwan this summer. The

congregation is actively seeking a new minister who speaks Taiwanese, English and Mandarin.

In the future, they hope to establish a Mandarin-speaking Taiwanese ministry, and will face the challenge of providing English ministry for eventual second and third generations.

**TORONTO**—Toronto Central and Formosan Taiwanese Churches have been walking the road to amalgamation in East Toronto Presbytery. The newly formed Toronto Formosan held its first service this October, and will be seeking an English-speaking minister, a new building, and a new name in the next two years.

"Amalgamation is never easy," said Rev. Nicholas Athanasiadis, the interim moderator for Toronto Central and convener of the amalgamation com-



The new Burnaby Taiwanese Presbyterian Church



mittee. "There's a lot to negotiate."

For the two Taiwanese congregations, negotiations include issues of history and identity. According to Athanasiadis and Wes Chang, a member of Toronto Central and the amalgamation committee, a large part of Formosan's congregation is composed of English-speaking, second generation young people who were born in Canada. This has posed integration difficulties for Central's older, Taiwanese-speaking congregation.

"Roots and history are very important," Athanasiadis said. "[These churches are] here today because of the hard work of the first generation that came together and became a congregation. How do you honour that?" he asked.

"The reality is our second generation has grown up. It is their turn to take charge, and it will be a different ministry to outreach to the English speaking community," said Chang. "I personally hope they will be open to Mandarin speaking ministry someday ... They have not been involved in Mandarin ministry because some people consider China as Taiwan's oppressor—this is my personal prayer that Taiwanese would preach the gospel to mainland Chinese even though they are enemies politically. Didn't Jesus teach us to love your enemies?"

The two churches began as a single congregation, but split during the 1980s to accommodate large numbers of immigrants who settled in the Toronto area. Now that immigration has declined, "it is quite natural to see the two churches get back together again," said Chang.

Athanasiadis does not think the process will be easy. "For well over 20 years they've developed and had their own community of faith," he observed. "But they've realized that they can no longer go it alone." ■

*Rev. David Pan will serve as minister and moderator, and the church will continue to meet at Formosan's former location until a new location has been found.*

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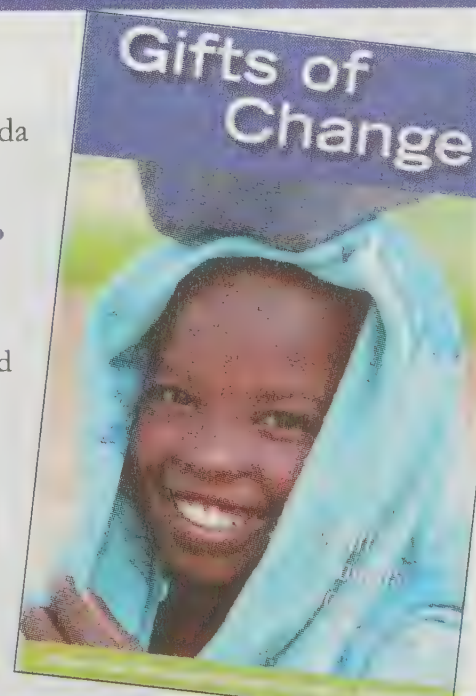
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# A Political Calling

Faith is a driving force in public life. BY CONNIE PURVIS

"IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN less about politics and more about service," said Jane Pitfield. "For me, it was about the message. I'm speaking up for people who have concerns that need to be heard." Pitfield ran for mayor of Toronto in 2006, and served for eight years previously as a city counsellor. She attends Leaside, Toronto.

For Jim Prentice, Minister of Industry and Conservative incumbent in Calgary's Centre-North riding, the choice to enter public life was "an extension of serving others and serving the community." He has been involved with Grace, Calgary, for many years.

Pitfield noted that Ward 26, which she served while counsellor, was one of the largest and most diverse in Toronto. It could be difficult making decisions on behalf of others; no one solution was good for all, and "for me to be able to pray for wisdom, insight and confidence when I felt strongly about an issue" was of vital importance.

"It takes a certain amount of cour-

age to stand up and run for election, and certainly that strength came from my faith," she said. For her, running was a clear calling from God.

"It has probably strengthened my faith," said Prentice. "Politics is quite challenging, and being a minister of the crown is also a challenging position, and I think you need strong faith to sustain you and guide you through that."

**"It takes a certain amount of courage to stand up and run for election, and certainly that strength came from my faith"**

For many, the road to politics was an unexpected turn in an otherwise apolitical life. Marion Schaffer, a retired Presbyterian minister who ran as a provincial Green Party candidate in Oakville last year, had no political ambitions. "I avoided it," Schaffer said. "I never ever joined a political party. I had no use for any politicians." It was not until she met Elizabeth May at a Green

Party event in Toronto that Schaffer found a political affiliation, and it was not until three people—including May herself—had suggested she run that she considered it an option.

Although she intended to run in Etobicoke this fall, Schaffer resigned in September. "As I progressed in the experience of becoming a politician, I realized that I was in the wrong place," she said. "I can never be what people think of as a politician."

For others, the choice to run was a logical step. "I've been a political junkie for years and when the opportunity presented itself to actually participate in the process rather than grumble about it, I took it," said Colin Carmichael, the Life and Mission Agency's new associate secretary of communication and resource production, who ran for the provincial Green Party in Cambridge last year.

For Prentice political life has been the fulfillment of a life-long interest. "I've always been quite interested in public service," he said, adding he always ensured that he was engaged in public service in different ways throughout his professional and business life. "[My wife Karen and I] essentially felt that the time was right in 2003-2004 when I entered public life."

Although she will never be a politician, Schaffer has plans to train young people and urge further involvement in her party. Pitfield has likewise left the immediate political sphere. "I've taken time to think about how I can take my experience and still serve others and serve God," said Pitfield. "For me, it's not about holding the political position—that gives you the opportunity and vantage point to effect political decisions—but there are other ways for citizens who are not elected to any kind of government to serve their community." ■

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## Gandhi remembered with violence

**ENI**—Violence against Christians continued in India, as the nation celebrated the 139th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth in October. The All India Christian Council said in early October that 57 Christians had been killed in the violence in the Kandhamal district, and that 4,300 Christian houses, as well as 142 churches and many Christian institutions had been looted and torched. Often described as a prophet of non-violence, Gandhi led the Indian independence movement against the British empire through peaceful protest.

In the Indian capital New Delhi, more than 10,000 Christians and others marked the final day of a week-long protest against the current violence by marching to the city's main memorial to Gandhi.

"Religious leaders have spoken out in one voice that there can be no justification for violence in the name of religion," Andrews Thazhath, Catholic archbishop of Thrissur and secretary of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council said at a meeting with Hindu leaders.

In a joint statement, the religious leaders said, "Violence is not part of any religion. Acts that pave the way for religious hatred and disharmony should not be promoted, and have to be stopped." The leaders also declared that "forced conversion is no

conversion" and they deplored "exploitation of faith for political gains."

The violence in Orissa broke out after the killing of Hindu leader Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati in August. A Maoist leader is reported to have claimed responsibility for the killing but some Hindu groups say it was a Christian conspiracy, as the 85-year-old slain monk had been campaigning against conversion to Christianity in Kandhamal, where he was based.

## Know your apostle from epistle

**ENI**—"Whether you are covering Creationism or Zionism, or want to know your apostle from your epistle, *The Bible Style Guide* is here to help journalists get started," said David Ashford, the interdenominational Bible Society's media development officer, who has written a guide to help journalists and broadcasters get up to speed on biblical matters.

Observers say the choice of the title for the handbook may reflect the hope that the 75-page work will find a place on journalists' reference shelves rather than being lost in the avalanche of information that pours into newsrooms.

Among the questions the guide addresses are, When was Jesus really born? Is intelligent design the same as creationism? How do Christians deal with violent texts in the Bible? How many books do the different versions of various Christian denominations contain, and who decided what should be included? The main section is a 20-page A-Z glossary.

## Bloggers' 10 commandments

**ENI**—Christian Internet bloggers have received 10 commandments from Britain's Evangelical Alliance to help them avoid the danger of writing in haste what they might later regret at leisure.

1. You shall not put your blog before your integrity.
2. You shall not make an idol of your blog.
3. You shall not misuse your screen name by using your anonymity to sin.
4. Remember the Sabbath day by taking one day off a week from your blog.

5. Honour your fellow bloggers above yourselves, and do not give undue significance to their mistakes.
6. You shall not murder someone else's honour, reputation or feelings.
7. You shall not use the Web to commit or permit adultery in your mind.
8. You shall not steal another person's content.
9. You shall not give false testimony against your fellow blogger.
10. You shall not covet your neighbour's blog ranking; be content with your own content.

## Tutu's birthday challenge

**ENI**—On the occasion of his 77th birthday in October Nobel Peace Prize laureate Desmond Tutu expressed his continuing vision for "culture that espouses listening, of fellowship, dialogue, mutual respect and of working together across generations.

"To the elder generation, my challenge is, take your role seriously. Be sensitive to the needs of the wider society. See how you can contribute individually and collectively, and act," said Tutu, a former archbishop of Cape Town in South Africa.

"To the younger generation," he said, "my challenge is, learn from the older generation. Do not repeat our mistakes but build on our successes, and find new ways to make this world a better place."

## Remember the poor

**ENI**—The global financial crisis should not derail progress that has been made on fighting poverty worldwide, religious leaders request. "When the powers that be declare there is an emergency, there is mobilization," Rev. David Beckmann, president of the Washington-based anti-hunger group Bread for the World, urged the United Nations Millennium Development Goals should not be forgotten.

Beckmann noted that as he spoke the U.S. Congress was debating a financial bailout for Wall Street financial institutions of nearly US\$700 billion, while "religious communities have been working with pennies for decades" against hunger and poverty. ■



# A Shared Humanity

A news story is at best only a metaphor. BY ANDREW FAIZ

I was speaking at a church about my experiences in Afghanistan, showing some of the hundreds of photos I took on that trip. Near the end of my talk I had a photo of a little girl holding on to her father. A typical photo—one that could be taken of my daughter as she suddenly becomes shy in the company of her parent's strange friends. With that image on the screen I said one thing I had learned from Afghanistan was that despite all the differences in culture, locale, history, economics and much else, at the heart of us, we share a common humanity. That children cling to their parents when strangers come to the door, partially curious about the big world out there, while holding on to the safety of the domestic circle.

A maudlin conclusion perhaps; and one I shared last month in this column after watching 32 movies at the Montreal Film Festival. Certainly one woman at the Afghanistan talk thought it was a silly punch line. Without missing a beat she said, "Yeah, till she grows up, does something he doesn't approve of and he kills her."

I was, rare for me, speechless. My first response was a rush of anger, which I hope I didn't express. Hadn't she heard my presentation? Hadn't she read my article? Or, had she heard the presentation through a particular filter? I never thought she was being racist, but as I calmed down (a little) I realized she was expressing the arrogance of a media watcher. She knew for a fact, because she had heard the stories, that honour killings happen over there. In Afghanistan.

Various human rights organizations broke that story a few years ago—approximately 200 girls killed in Afghanistan in 2006 for "inappropriate relationships." A powerful story.

But is that story representative of Afghanistan? Is it representative of fathers and daughters? Is it the story of Muslims? Yes, it's a powerful story, but does it illustrate Afghanistan?

During the Summer of SARs in Toronto my sister-in-law in Langley, B.C., called to say we should move in with her for the summer. She had been hearing stories of people

dying in Toronto and assumed we were all in a state of quarantine. From her vantage, across the country, it seemed Toronto was shut-down because that's the only story she was getting from the city.

I made the same assumption on September 11th, 2001, when I forgot Manhattan was a really big island. I finally spoke to a friend who was then living on the Upper East Side who said he had as much a relationship to the fateful events as I did. His work and home were so far away, he too was watching it all on TV.

**Despite all the differences in culture, locale, history, economics and much else, at the heart of us, we share a common humanity**

In our 24/7 media world we think we know the truth but we know very little. A news story is at best only a metaphor for conditions in the village, city, country from which it has been filed; at its worst, which is most of what we get, it is often a complicated mixture of cultural biases and it-bleeds-it-leads cynicism.

I could argue, from my limited experience of being there, that the photograph of the little girl holding on to her daddy is the true story of Afghanistan—a story of culture, tradition, community and hope. But based solely upon an unscientific survey of stories from Afghanistan, that is not the story we—you and me, the consumers of media, the ones who pay for it—want. We want stories of hateful ideologies, ignorant families and dead soldiers. That is Afghanistan to us; and Somalia and Sudan, and many other such places, caught in civil wars and filled with non-Canadians.

The onus is always on us to discern what we consume. Because consume is what we do best of all; often smugly, judging the world in our shadow. Superciliously sitting atop Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy Of Needs. Forgetting our shared humanity in the face of the never-ending news-cycle. And we must discern in favour of our shared humanity. ■





From top left: 1. Grace Mabechale as a student nurse 2. Rev. Canon Walter Chikamba in England 3. Grace with the Women's Guild 4. Walter at a birthday party 5. Walter with all his grandchildren 6. Walter with one of his parishioners after church 7. Grace at a women's fundraising event in Harare 8. Walter and Grace's wedding.

FAMILY PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARGARET ZONDO AND FAMILY



# A COLONIAL CHILD

## GROWING UP IN ZIMBABWE

BY MARK ANTONIO

*You can take an African out of the village but you cannot take the village out of an African.—an African saying*

**I** was born into the Manyika tribe in Mutare, Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe, to a preacher man and a nurse. Manicaland was referred to as New England by the early settlers and missionaries who flocked there, establishing mission stations and schools. Two distinct characteristics of the Manyika tribe are their excessive consultations during roundtable decision-making processes and their belief that they possess extraordinary powers to send a bolt of lightning to their enemies.

My father—Rev. Canon Walter Tendayi Chitambo—was undergoing a three-year theological training program in South Africa at the time of my birth.

In consultation with my grandmother I was named Margaret. I also have a Shona traditional name, Rudo, which means ‘love.’ In the colonial days, African parents gave English names to their offspring but this changed after the attainment of black majority rule in 1980, when Shona and Ndebele tribal names became expressions of pride and identity. Still, not every child is proud of his or her tribal name, especially those who grow up in the West.

Before my father joined the ministry, he was a successful high school principal and my mother—Grace Rudo Chitambo, nee Mahechani—a qualified nurse. They lived a comfortable life in rural Mutare. My father told me his family was at first opposed ➤



to him working for the church. He grew up in a polygamous family; his mother was the last of my grandfather's four wives and it was that childhood experience which influenced him tremendously to lead a Christian life. Upon successful completion of his training, my father returned home and was assigned a congregation in one of the poor black townships. Zimbabwean cities were segregated according to race, and Africans lived in townships at the edge of the city. If there was an uprising, so the colonial logic went, it would be easy to quell. In such an arrangement, Africans faced numerous restrictions and could not freely move between places without presenting a pass—a government-issued identity card containing the name and locality of one's village, and the name of one's biological father and chief or headman.

Despite living in the city, we had our share of village life by taking part in all the activities expected of an African child on a visit to the village. We worked the land, herded cattle and goats, listened to stories by the fire while roasting corn and peanuts, and bathed with other village kids in the river. We enjoyed a trip to the country store and practiced our English with the white storekeepers. In school, we received all instruction in English, the official language. These and other activities shaped our future attitudes and impressions about life without boundaries.

I recall the first time my grandmother visited us in the city. She had never come across, let alone used, a flushing washroom. She spoke no English so when on a trip to the village my father shouted at our family dog to get out, she thought its name was Out and proceeded to ask my cousin to give Out some food. We laughed so hard and told our friends about the incident for a long time after.

My family later left Mutare and moved to Chinhoyi the

capital of Mashonaland West Province. In Chinhoyi, my father was assigned a seven-point charge ministering to a vibrant multi-racial and multi-cultural mining and agricultural community scattered on commercial farms and in small mining towns. We lived first in an old rural house before moving to Chinhoyi town. My parents lived under constant fear of us accidentally falling into the latrine pit that served as the communal washroom, or worse, into the village well. Such tragedies were common because of a lack of the basic needs for a safe and healthy life in the rural areas. We traveled 10 kilometres every day to town in the company of fellow students to attend a native or black African school. White children attended private schools. One such morning, we witnessed a tragic vehicle accident on the busy main highway involving a member of our group, a young girl. The images of that particular occurrence are still vivid in my mind.

Although at the time government policy reinforced complete racial segregation, whites and blacks lived side by side peacefully. Society was structured along the master and servant model. The division of labour was clear; whites ran the economy, lived in posh houses and owned the best fertile land—70 per cent before independence in 1980 although they comprised only four per cent of the population. They used sophisticated machinery operated by poorly paid black immigrant farm workers.

White farmers grew mostly tobacco for export. Migrant workers were from neighbouring Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. The lives of farm workers revolved around the farm compound and most of their children became farm labourers as well, with limited exposure to the world around them. Equal education and career opportunities were limited for blacks and the pay structures in every profession tipped in favour of whites. There were hospitals for whites, park benches for whites, and it was a criminal offence for an African to be caught







Women at work in a Native Reserve in Siwundula, Zimbabwe, 1956.  
LEFT: The family in Harare. And at elder brother David's wedding

sitting on a "whites-only" bench. However, the white farmers at the time contributed immensely to farm infrastructure by building schools, clinics and very basic crowded housing for their workers. My siblings and I spent time amongst our friends from church who lived on a farm.

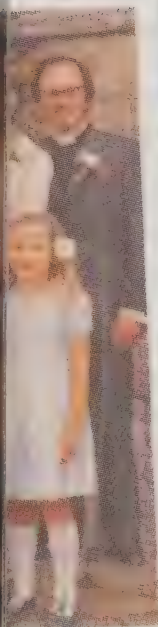
On Fridays, the Chinhoyi town centre was littered with white farmers in khaki shorts, shirts and farmer shoes delivering produce and stocking up on supplies in the company of their faithful black servants. Farm workers were compelled to purchase their groceries and other goods from the farm store on credit. The markup on goods obtained at the farm was exorbitant and farmers attributed this discrepancy to the cost of transport. The system had complete control over farm workers, producing a dependency syndrome. It also meant that meager wages ended up back in the white farmer's pockets after deductions owed for the purchase of food on credit. This cycle of poverty and general illiteracy among farm workers prevented them from progressing socially and economically and would haunt them into the future.

After the infamous land reform program of

2000, when the government seized white commercial farms, farm workers were displaced and lost the few benefits they had from living on the farms. Since most of them were of immigrant descent, the present government instituted parliamentary legislation that rendered them foreigners and denied them the right to vote. In general elections before 2000, farm workers had not been concerned with voting because of the influence of their employers. They contributed to the rejection of the Constitutional Referendum of 1999 and at that moment became enemies of the state.

In Chinhoyi, my family travelled every Sunday to all the small farming and mining towns bordering Zambia for church services. Farmers, farm workers and their respective families worshipped together. My dad held mass in English, Shona and Chichewa. Chichewa is spoken by immigrants from Malawi and Zambia. We learned to speak the local dialect and looked forward to the long trip every Sunday. After every such excursion, we always stopped by the Chinhoyi caves for a family picnic.

Every weekend we made the short trip to the main bus depot to receive meat, vegetables, milk and fruit sent by white farmers. One Easter Sunday, my Mom decided to cook duck for dinner. In order to save electricity, she lit a fire outside to boil the duck before roasting it. When she went to check on it later, it was gone. We ended up set- ➤





ting for fresh groundnuts, pumpkin, fresh corn and sweet potato for Easter dinner.

As children we became accustomed to being in the company of both black and white worshippers in the city and in the rural areas. My recollection of childhood is therefore one that was non-racial, Christian and with a strong sense of community. I recall attending church services with my family in the city too and watching my dad lead worship in a congregation made up of 90 per cent white worshippers. At the completion of my father's assignment in Mashonaland West, we were taken to the top of a hill one day by two white city councillors and shown a section of the town that would be named after my father. Chitambo section in Chinhoyi township still exists up to this day in memory of my father.

After Chinhoyi, we moved to Harare, the capital city, where my father would eventually settle until his retirement. Breakfast in my family started with the children lining up for a tablespoon of cod liver oil. We hated that stuff. We attended the regular elementary and junior high public schools but upon qualifying through national examinations, the church paid for our high school education while my parents took care of the rest of the expenses. On Saturday afternoon, my father often took us on a drive in his Hillman through white residential areas and we stopped at the homes of some of his many friends and parishioners.

My eldest sister and I attended an all-girls mission boarding school in rural Mutare staffed mainly by white nuns from Britain, Italy, Canada and France. Life in boarding school was tough and basic and we missed being at home. Despite this, boarding school also offered an opportunity for building character, relationships, and continuity of friendships. My English teacher and mentor, Dr. Coutts, was Canadian, and is buried in the mission school cemetery. I recall how we girls laughed at her strange accent but she was the one who inspired my high school dream to settle in Canada someday.

Servants of Malawian origin were preferred because they had a reputation for being hardworking and obedient. The language used among servants and their masters was called Chilapalapa, a mixture of Shona, English, Afrikaans and Chichewa. We had servants too but they lived with us in the main house. Servants usually lived in the quarters situated far away from the main house. They were not allowed visitors but got Sundays off to attend church and visit their families in the townships or rural areas. Grandmothers, aunts and uncles raised the servants' children who then had nothing in common with the lives lived by their parents in the white suburbs.

I visited Zimbabwe in July last year and have many personal stories of a country at the crossroads. Access to food, water, electricity and basics that we take for granted in Canada is a daily struggle. Other countries in Southern Africa have also begun to feel the effects of the continuing political crisis and economic decline in Zimbabwe.

By the end of 2008, 45 per cent of Zimbabwe's population will be at risk of starvation. Currently, at least two million people need urgent food assistance. The United Nations has reported that maize production in Zimbabwe for 2008 was estimated at 575,000 tons—an estimated deficit of around 1 million tons. Shops are now empty of Zimbabwe's staple food, maize meal. In August 2008, Zimbabwe's central bank Chief Gideon Gono urged a six-month price and salary freeze in a bid to rein in runaway inflation. This move has angered workers and trade unions but their complaints fall on deaf ears.

By June this year, inflation stood at 11.2 million per cent (as opposed to 7,634 per cent in July 2007) although independent economists put the figure at 40 million per cent and rising. Wages cannot keep up with inflation while food and other shortages force people to spend valuable time chasing after basics like bread, milk and cornmeal. We were raised on cornmeal porridge with peanut butter, but this too has become a scarce commodity. Every day, items are added to the long list of shortages.

The historic signing of a power-sharing deal between the two factional leaders of the opposition party, Morgan Tsvangirayi and Arthur Mutambara of the Movement for Democratic Change, and President Robert Mugabe of Zanu PF on September 15, 2008 is a breath of fresh air for the Southern African region, ordinary Zimbabweans and the international community. It was a vote of confidence for South Africa's outgoing President Thabo Mbeki, the African National Congress and a boost for African nationalism and the concept that African problems should be left to African solutions. As word of the deal spread, overjoyed residents danced, sang and ululated in the streets, while messages of praise and offers of help flooded in from overseas.

Zimbabwe's future still hangs in the balance and requires the commitment of all of us to make things work. Food security is a priority and so is healing and reconciliation to be led by the churches in Zimbabwe who have been in the forefront of providing food, shelter and spiritual inspiration to an embattled citizenry.

Zimbabwe offers the international community a golden opportunity to take collective action, genuinely engage key political players from both sides, and salvage what is left of the country. It is inundated by extraordinary multifaceted challenges that call for an extraordinary approach. Most important, Zimbabwe is still blessed with some government infrastructure, educated and sophisticated citizens, resources, and the recent memory of lively and engaging politics. Time will tell if the all-inclusive transitional government can survive. For now it is the best shot and only opportunity at restoring the nation and enabling it to take its place once again on the global scene. ■

*Margaret Zondo is program administrator in International Ministries at national offices. She is an often-sought speaker and expert on Zimbabwe in Canadian secular media.*



# How Poverty Wounds the Soul

From our man in Malawi.

BY GLENN INGLIS

**T**wenty five years ago when I walked through the Blantyre Mission, the school children would run toward me shouting, "How are you?" They were practicing their English, trying to get that pesky 'r' right, and they would giggle with delight when they got a response from me. Today, the children of those students look me in the eye and say, "Give me money!"

My wife, Linda, and I have slides of local markets with smiling vendors amidst colourful produce. Today if you take a camera into the same markets you can cause a small riot. Burly traders will rush towards you demanding money or confiscate the camera.

What has changed? Mary Helen Garvin was in Malawi for a few months training grief counsellors who carry out HIV/AIDS home care. Before she left we were reflecting on an issue that troubled her and everyone else of good will, both Malawian and expatriate: Why is

there such temptation to take what is not yours? Why is there so much theft these days? Even in the village, the place where one experiences the richness of African culture, there is a rise in robbery, witchcraft and family breakdown. Her response to these questions is the title of this article.

IN 1980 MALAWI WAS WEALTHIER per capita than it is today, as is the case in most of sub-Saharan Africa. There was a brutal dictatorship and access to the outside world was severely restricted. Missionaries were a window

to the world, a source of information, support and solidarity. Today, there is satellite TV, the BBC on FM radio 24/7, and of course, music videos. In a small town without electricity, one can find a theatre where an entrepreneur has a generator, TV and VCR and for a few cents you can watch Hollywood, Bollywood or pornography with no age restrictions. What image of reality does this provide?

As the experts say, everyone in Malawi has been infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. In one village, for example, there are 27 AIDS orphans and only ➤







300 adults. How do you live when you think the world has passed you by? How do you live when those who nurture, teach and guide you die when you are a child and you have no one to help you? How do you live when you have a decent job but you inherit the children of deceased siblings and pay for the funerals of those who have nothing? How do you live when every time you get a chance to see a TV screen you see images of a world that seems to mock your

that will save us.

When the rich have gained the world and lost their souls what do they do? More or less what the poor do—live for the moment, albeit at a more comfortable level.

Jesus had deep compassion for the poor. But he had severe warnings for those who thought wealth could purchase salvation. The Biblical story affirms rather that it is God who initiates progress through creation, revelation and liberation. God reveals the way but God will not force us to go that way. That is why grace must abound.

Still, I believe that human progress, even on the moral level, is possible, but it requires a repentance and sacrifice unpalatable to many modern people. It requires the love and mutual accountability that is only possible when people trust God more than themselves. And it requires the faith that true wealth only emerges when people do justice, love compassion and walk humbly with their God.

One of my best friends in Malawi is called Murphy and, like his famous namesake, he is an optimist. There are moments when we sit on a veranda and look out upon purple hills lifting towards the setting sun made crimson by haze and smoke rising from village fires. The evening doves coo themselves to rest in flame trees and swifts make a late meal of flying insects. You can see Eden when God declared all things good. That's when I too am an optimist again.

Can we not trust the One who gave us all this? Can we not follow the One who though rich made himself poor that we might know the fullness of life? I guess that is why we, as followers of Jesus, can never be the people of progress but rather must ever be the people of the Cross. ■

*Rev. Glenn Inglis' mission to Malawi is supported by International Ministries.*

**As the experts say, everyone in Malawi has been infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. In one village, for example, there are 27 AIDS orphans and only 300 adults**

poverty and feed your sense of hopelessness?

It is a tribute to so many Malawians that they maintain a healthy Christian faith. They support their churches and make sacrifices, beyond what most Canadians can imagine, to keep their families and communities alive. But there is also a drift to the charismatic fellowships that preach the gospel of prosperity. Generally, it is the preacher who prospers most from this peculiar interpretation of scripture.

So to answer the question about corruption and theft, I posit a simple answer: One needs to have hope for tomorrow to make sacrifices today. Otherwise, take what you can.

As I thought about this problem, though, it also occurred to me that I could write another article entitled: How Wealth Wounds The Soul. The god of prosperity promises freedom and autonomy so that we can enjoy the fruits and ignore the responsibilities of our economic life. The life force of the Western world has been harnessed to satisfy this god and now we see the results. Our planet weeps, creatures are driven from their habitat and still we maintain it is progress



# Different, Diverse

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Our Master of Theological Studies and Master of Religious Education programs are also thriving and providing new and exciting opportunities for theological studies for those not intending to serve as congregational ministers. We continue, with our colleagues at the Toronto School of Theology, to offer Advanced Degree programs for those wishing to continue their theological studies. We are particularly pleased to be part of the rejuvenation of the Doctor of Ministry program at the Toronto School of Theology, with Dr. Andrew Irvine, a member of our faculty, playing a key role.

These programming changes have resulted in the highest student enrollment in the history of the College with 175 students studying in our Basic and Advanced Degree programs this year!

The Ewart College legacy of Christian Education is also experiencing change with the addition of three new lay education certificates this year. In direct response to a demand for further study, we now offer English Lay certificates in: Youth Ministry Leadership, Pastoral Care Leadership and Worship Leadership and a new Korean language program known as the Korean

Bible Academy.

The faces at the College are also changing—Knox faculty enthusiastically welcomed Rev. Dr. Pam McCarroll to its ranks as Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology this summer. Students will benefit greatly from her expertise in this critical area of ministry. This hiring affirms Knox's commitment to re-establish a full faculty complement following the necessary cuts made during efforts to balance the school's budget nine years ago.

Faculty are busy researching and publishing. Professor Charles Fensham recently published *Emerging from the Dark Age Ahead* an important book which explores the timely question of the future of the Church. Professor Stuart Macdonald has co-written some groundbreaking work related to the Canadian census and also contributed the chapter on Presbyterian and Reformed Christians and ethnicity in the book *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada*.

Knox College continues to seek out its path and find innovative ways to provide the best theological education available for our Presbyterian Church in Canada and for the broader Reformed Christian world. We are humbled by our growth and your generous support of our efforts. ■

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# Four Ministries, One College

St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver, is a Presbyterian presence in secular B.C.

**T**hirty-six per cent of British Columbians claim "no religion" on their census forms. Of the remainder, 33 per cent are Protestants and 23 per cent are Roman Catholics. In this very secular setting, St. Andrew's Hall, a college of the Presbyterian Church on the campus of the University of British Columbia, offers four ministries.

The first is theological education through our role in the Vancouver School of Theology. Presbyterians are strongly represented on the VST faculty with five ministers—Pat Dutcher-Walls, Glen Davis, Joyce Davis, Roberta Clare and Stephen Farris. More recently it has become possible to take a Master of Divinity at the noted evangelical school, Regent College, and study concurrently at VST for a diploma that will permit entry into the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. The big news this year is that St. Andrew's Hall is funding a new professorial chair for Studies in the Reformed Tradition to be filled, we hope, by next summer.

Secondly, our Elders' Institute provides education for ruling elders. The best-known program is our online courses. Two new

upcoming online courses are Pastoral Visiting with Jean Morris and Living Faith: A Closer Look with Stephen Hayes. Sometimes whole congregational sessions sign up for online courses but, of course, individuals are also welcome. The next edition of our introduction to the work of elders, *Serving As A Ruling Elder*, will run from January 19 to February 27, 2009. New elders, or longtime elders needing a refresher, are invited to sign up.

Elders' Institute also goes on the road and provides both printed and online e-resources. We make a particular effort to reach out to our smaller churches as well as the larger ones. Last summer EI director Roberta Clare travelled in a camper van to Woodstock, Hanwell and Harvey, New Brunswick to lead workshops on evangelism, finding and keeping volunteers, and fighting burnout. Visit the website [www.elders-institute.ca](http://www.elders-institute.ca) for more information about courses, resources and on the road events.

Thirdly, St. Andrew's Hall is a home in the heart of the UBC campus for theological students, UBC students, visiting scholars and their ➤

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## ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

families. Our house is full once again and, depending on the number of children, as many as 275 people call St. Andrew's Hall home. Our residences, constructed in 1995, have recently been painted and recarpeted throughout. More construction is in the offing for St. Andrew's Hall in the future.

Our fourth ministry is outreach to our residents and to the wider university community. The Hall hosts Korean Campus Ministry, the largest Christian student organization on

campus, activities of Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship and also the campus chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our staff and our student chaplains also run soup and sandwich nights, film nights, prayer meetings, Bible studies, and potluck dinners. A new venture is a Mandarin speaking ministry. We think of ourselves as a missionary institution and seek to present the gospel of Christ in as many ways as possible. ■

[www.standrews.edu](http://www.standrews.edu)



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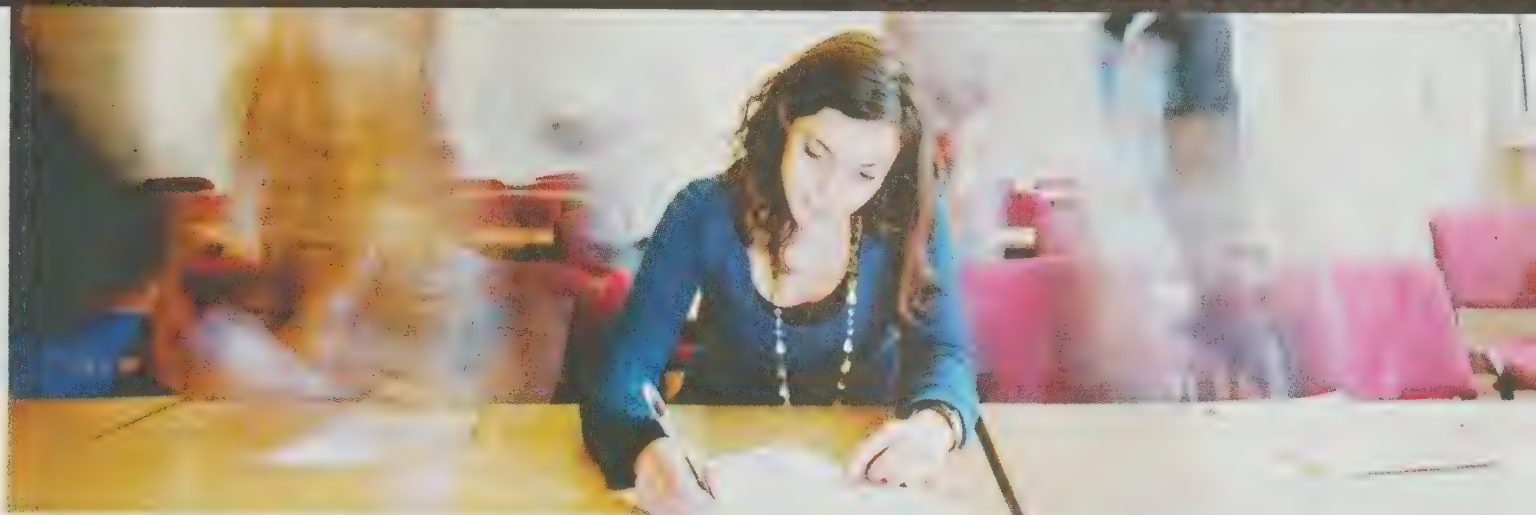
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## Ministry and Leadership

Presbyterian College, Montreal, provides a community of faith

The Presbyterian College, Montreal has been educating and equipping people for congregational ministry and Christian leadership within Christ's church since 1865. As Principal John Vissers sees it, "a good theological education helps people connect their gifts with God's work in the world, and helps them to discern God's call on their lives." If the end goal is building and maintaining healthy congregations, the church needs leaders who are competent and committed.

For this reason Presbyterian College

remains focused on the core values of the Reformed tradition's commitment to excellence in theological education: rigorous academic study in Bible, theology, and history; relevant and practical pastoral training in skills for ministry; and deep spiritual formation and character development.

During their time at Presbyterian College students are taught and mentored by some of Canada's leading scholars in religion at McGill University, Christian leaders from diverse traditions in the ecumenical consortium of the Montreal School of Theology,

an engaging faculty of Presbyterian leaders committed to the Reformed faith, and a local group of congregational ministers in the Presbytery of Montreal.

In 2008 Presbyterian College welco- ➤

### St. Andrew's Hall

A theological college of The Presbyterian Church in Canada is seeking a Professor of Studies in the Reformed Tradition. Candidates should hold a PhD and be specialists in Reformed Theology or Reformation History.

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For more information please contact  
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med Rev. Dr. Dale Woods as the new Director of Pastoral Studies who joins the Faculty after almost 14 years as Senior Minister at First, Brandon, Man. Woods' task is to help students integrate their academic study of theology with their formation for ministry. He brings extensive expertise and experience in congregational leadership and change management. And he joins a faculty that is active in the preaching and pastoral life of the church.

The College is housed in Montreal but it has classrooms around the world. Every January the third year students travel to Matanzas, Cuba to participate in a 10-day global exposure program in partnership with the Protestant seminary there. Students return transformed—with new perspectives on faith, ministry and the global church.

Presbyterian College also has a growing lay education department under the leadership of Dr. Shuling Chen who has experience in church education, social work, clinical pastoral education and chaplaincy. One of the college's lay education programs—Theology for Everyone—with Professor Joseph McLelland and Vissers, will be featured in the pages of the *Record* throughout 2009.

The College places an emphasis on the importance of continuing education for clergy. The week-long program every February draws church leaders from across Canada for study, conversation, and prayer—to assist them in keeping in touch with trends and trajectories in theology, ministry and culture. Featured speakers during February 16-20, 2009 include Margaret Somerville, David Kilgour, Art Van Seters, Victor Shepherd, and Gerbern Oegema on such topics as religion in a secular society, faith and public life, preaching, spiritual theology and biblical interpretation.

Students are drawn to Presbyterian College because it provides a community of faith and learning with small classes, intimate and friendly surroundings, in a great city, at affordable prices. As Vissers emphasizes, "we're trying to make theological education accessible to everyone in the church." Course fees at all levels are carefully managed to remain consistently competitive, and the College offers a generous bursary program. ■

[www.presbyteriancollege.ca](http://www.presbyteriancollege.ca).



Presbyterian College Faculty



# When He Cometh...

Listen to words of hope.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

Advent 1, November 30

Isaiah 64:1-9 / Mark 13:(1-23) 24-27

When He cometh,  
when He cometh  
To make up His jewels ...  
He will gather, He will gather  
The gems for His kingdom;

**D**id you grow up in church singing that hymn? Did you get the message? "Be good. Be really good. Good enough for Jesus to love you. If you're lucky, he'll come down and grab you, and stick you to his crown." Did you want Jesus to love you? Maybe you did. But I'll bet you didn't want to die!

This all comes back to me, every year, when the Advent scriptures cry for God to tear open the heavens and come down. When Jesus talks about coming back, riding the clouds of heaven. And when we hear how he'll come when no one expects him. Like a thief in the night.

"When He cometh, when He cometh ..." Advent cometh every year, just when you start to think seriously about another Christmas. We already know what Christmas looks like, sounds like, tastes like, feels like.

But Advent isn't about looking back. Getting ready to go to Bethlehem again. The Advent message looks forward. It says Jesus will come in a new way. We don't know exactly what

that will look like, sound like, feel like. But the message is clear. The One who came a long time ago will come again at the end of time.

We get that message from Gospels written for believers who lived in terrifying times. Already seeing signs that things would get much worse for them, before there could be any hope of better days. Losing someone you loved, while working peacefully, side-by-side, was a distinct possibility. The Romans did things like that. Snatching up religious people to put the fear of Caesar into other religious people.

Those Christians looked for the Son of Man to ride a cloud down to

earth one day and rescue his friends. Their gospels told them to stay alert, to be faithful, to continue working. To watch for a day that wasn't on anyone's calendar but God's.

"When He cometh, when He cometh ..." The first disciples sang those words with joy. Their singing drove away their fear.

"When He cometh, when He cometh ..." Somewhere along the way most of us stopped singing those words. Maybe because they still strike fear into our hearts. Maybe because they sound too much like a theme song for the *Left Behind* books and movies. More likely because life in our part of the world ➤





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## PROGRESSIVE LECTIONARY

is so good we don't want to imagine it ending, or us leaving it. What could Jesus bring to the world that would be better than the world we know? After all, When He Cometh and all the other old children's hymns were written in a time of high infant mortality. People needed to re-frame the death of children as some kind of blessing! We're beyond all that!

What could Jesus  
bring to the world that  
would be better than  
the world we know?

Well, at least those of us who are privileged, white westerners are.

"When He cometh, when He cometh ..." I don't know just what that means. Will he come in a singular event, on a day that ends all days? Or do we see him, like a Son of Man on the clouds of heaven, when we close our eyes in death? Will he come at the end of the age, or the end of my time, and yours?

It's enough to know he will come. While we wait, we have work to do. And as we work, we discover he just can't help slipping in and out of our business in the meantime!

He creeps in, when we least expect him, to help us prepare for the big celebration. He'll slip out, just for a shake of a lamb's tail. Then come in the front door, with trumpets blowing.

The Advent prophecies tell us what kind of world God aims to build. What this kingdom where Jesus reigns looks like. The prophets' visions tell us what to aim for as we wait, and watch, and work.

"When He cometh, when He cometh ..." Will he find us working for the healing of the nations? Will he find us, joyful, gracious, celebrating our faith?

Listen, in this time of Advent, and hear words of hope. Not words of fear. Words of hope. ■

*Laurence DeWolfe lives in Halifax.*



# Mrs. Muddle's Example

Remembering a remarkable woman. Part One. BY PHIL CALLAWAY

ILLUSTRATION BY JONNY MENDELSSON



I was only four when Mrs. Muddle adopted me for a week. With my mother in the hospital and my father needing help, she must have seen me pulling my wagon complete with a cargo of grasshoppers along 8th Avenue on "Prairie Heights," looking sad and forlorn. And so she took me in. That's what neighbors did in those days. Although I may have been a handful, Mrs. Muddle smiled a lot during that week. A four-year-old doesn't remember much. But he remembers a smile. I wasn't her first child. She had five others. But none of them seemed to mind my intrusion.

My own Dad came along and tucked me in each night, so I knew all would be well. But one day it wasn't. One day, they tell me, I found a fresh jar of sweet pickles in Mrs. Muddle's fridge. By the time I was full, the jar was empty. Mrs. Muddle

didn't say much, just held my little forehead as I transferred those sweet pickles from my stomach to her sink. She had every right to say, "Ha! It serves you right, you gluttonous little orphan." But she didn't. I was worth more than a jar of pickles to her, I suppose. And so I enjoyed that week. I enjoyed her smile. But I can't face sweet pickles to this day.

**A four-year-old doesn't remember much—  
but he remembers a smile**

Many years have passed.

On a Friday afternoon a month before Christmas, I joined 300 others in an over-flowing church to celebrate Mrs. Muddle's life. And mourn her passing. At the front, ➤



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at  
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**Fall 2008**

**The Chris Vais  
Memorial Lectureship**

**Kicking Against the  
Darkness: Hope for the  
Living of These Days**

**Guest Lecturer:**

The Rev. Dr. Pam McCarroll

**Date:** Sat. Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008

**Time:** 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

**Cost:** FREE, please RSVP

**The Ada Adams  
Lectureship**

**Diversity of Youth Ministry  
in the Canadian Context**

**Guest Lecturers:**

Prof. Nam Soon Song  
The Rev. Paulette Brown  
The Rev. Jennifer Donnelly

**Date:** Wed. Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Time:** 1:30-4:30 p.m.

**Cost:** FREE, please RSVP

\*\*\*\*\*

**For more information  
and to RSVP:**

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## CALLAWAY

beneath a rugged wooden cross, sat a few hundred brightly-wrapped shoeboxes, waiting for December and the volunteers at Samaritan's Purse to scatter them Santa-like around the world. The coordinator for Operation Christmas Child in our community is Tony Hanson. Mr. Hanson is one of those elderly people who views retirement as an opportunity to do things he always wanted to do before. When he grows up, he wants to be a child, he'll tell you. And so he laughs often, and his wrinkles are in all the right places. He's even apt to tell you a joke or two or toss a wise saying your way when you shake hands after church: "He who laughs last thinks slowest," is one of them.

Standing to his feet during the funeral, Mr. Hanson took one of the boxes to the pulpit and smiled at the crowd. "This is Mrs. Muddle's shoebox," he said, lifting the lid and pulling out a freshly-pressed shirt. "Don't worry, I haven't opened any of the other boxes."

The box was marked for a boy 10-14 years old. In it were clothes, a Bible, and things boys around the world seem to enjoy. It also contained a hand-written note. "Do you mind



if I open it?" asked Mr. Hanson. The family nodded its eager approval.

I sat near the back, listening as he read the last words Mrs. Muddle wrote. Words that left me and a few hundred others fighting back the tears. ■

*The second part of this story will appear next month.*

*Phil Callaway is the author of Who Put My Life on Fast Forward? (Harvest House). Visit him at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com).*

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# Mary Fontaine

## and Hummingbird Ministries

Walking with British Columbia's Aboriginal Community. BY KATHLEEN BOLTON

**M**ary Fontaine founded Hummingbird Ministries in 2004 as a Presbyterian ministry of healing for the Aboriginal people of British Columbia's West Coast. And she was ordained this past spring—see the July/August *Record*—in Mistawasis, Sask., where she is from. Her ordination gives her new opportunities in her ministry. Many have asked her to baptize them, their children or their grandchildren. Now she can—the first person she baptised was her own grandson. For those already baptized as children, Fontaine will plan rededication services. (The Presbyterian Church in Canada doesn't

advocate re-baptism.) Fontaine is excited about introducing the sacrament of communion to her Aboriginal circles. Feasting is an important part of First Nations communities, so communion is likely to become an important part of worship.

Hummingbird's worship uses the sacred circle, where the Creator God is placed at the centre. A lot of sharing and listening happens at these circles, some of which is very painful. It can be overwhelming for leaders to take all that pain upon themselves. Emotional healing is possible only by lifting the burdens and pains to God in prayer. And the sharing is recip-

rocal. Fontaine says, "As a teacher, I teach, but I also learn; I listen but am also heard; I pray for others but they also pray for me."

Listening is key to Fontaine's work. One of the needs identified by Aboriginal people is a desire to reach out to youth, since they often don't feel comfortable attending either a church or a traditional longhouse. This is also complicated by the reluctance of today's youth to be identified as Aboriginal. Fontaine's approach has been to meet them where they're at, whether that's playing ball outside on the church yard, attending the Coast Salish Annual Paddle to Lummi ►



Canoe Journey, or encouraging youth to participate in the annual Native American Indigenous Games.

Fontaine has taken seriously the Presbyterian Church's agenda to "walk with" the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. This commitment stems from the church's 1994 confession regarding its involvement in residential schools. Fontaine, through Hummingbird Ministries, is gently joining hands

with the First Nations people of British Columbia. It is significant for those to whom she ministers that she is both a Christian and a First Nations person. She is a personification of harmony and unity.

Hummingbird Ministries began as a ministry of Central, Vancouver. Initially an advisory team was formed, but this has since become a council, consistent with principles of non-

hierarchical equality and team leadership. As the ministry grew, it was placed under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Westminster.

Hummingbird Ministries is supported financially by many sources, including the Presbyterian Innovative Ministries and the Jack Smith Fund of the Synod of B.C., the Presbytery of Westminster, Women's Missionary Society groups, the Cooke's Fund of Toronto, and Presbyterian congregations and individuals. Hummingbird's biggest supporter, Canada Ministries, recently committed to ongoing financial assistance, which provides a significant level of support and encouragement.

Hummingbird Ministries will soon be registered as a charitable organization. For more information, please go to [hummingbirdministries.ca](http://hummingbirdministries.ca). ■

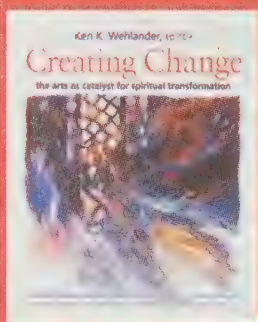
*Kathleen Bolton is a freelance writer based in Burnaby, B.C.*

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# Calvin, Consistory, Company

The roots of Presbytery. BY CHRISTINE O'REILLY

**P**resbytery. It is part of our name, Presbyterian.

Some love Presbytery; some detest it and some ignore it. Some, like Walter Bryden, suggest that "Presbyterian systems are often so grotesquely abused and so ineffectively operated that the genius of that system has seldom been permitted to reveal itself at its best."

Who is behind the 'genius' of Presbyterian systems? What is Presbytery supposed to look like? How is it to function? Who is it to serve? What was the original idea behind this institution so reviled and revered? While this article cannot answer every question, it can begin to explore the foundations of the 'presbytery'—foundations

that take us back to the legacy of John Calvin.

Calvin sought to be faithful to God and to scripture in all things, including the organization and order of the Church. His highly developed doctrine of the church decreed, "The holy Christian Church, whose only head is Christ, is born of the Word of God, and abides in the same, and listens not to the voice of the stranger." The Church's faith, worship and order must proclaim and reflect God's Word. Calvin envisioned and established a Church based on Biblical principles of leadership by Spirit-gifted people,

among whom were 'elders.' The word comes from the Greek *presbuteros*, which means 'elder' (an indication of leadership, not age!). In reaction to excesses and abuses of church governance in his day, Calvin exhorted that

**{ One of the keys to John Calvin's enduring influence is his practical advice on Christian living. He understood ordinary people in the midst of ordinary life**

the church was to be organized and ordered through a system of elder-leadership: a leadership from among the body of Christ, not a hierarchically-appointed or successor based position of higher authority. The ►



order of the Church's life is essential to maintain faithfulness to God's Word. The governance of the Church, under Christ, was not to reside in any one person, but in a body of believers called to the particular ministries of teaching and ruling God's people.

Calvin's work and ministry in the Swiss city of Geneva shaped not only his congregation but the entire city and culture. In his *Draft Ecclesial Ordinances*, he proposed the establishment of two institutions in Geneva: the Consistory and the Company of Pastors.

The Consistory, composed of pastors (teaching elders) and ruling elders was responsible for church order and discipline, and meted out disciplinary action. The primary concern of the Consistory was the oversight of moral behaviour and the promotion of personal sanctification. The records of the Consistory are filled with examples of cases brought before the 'court' and the consequences issued. Ministers and elders were intimately involved in the lives of parishioners in a way that most would find intrusive and unwarranted in today's culture.

The Company of Pastors was responsible for examination and ordination of ministers, continuing biblical and

theological education, mutual theological and ethical encouragement, and missionary work in neighbouring countries. The Company met weekly for worship, study of the Bible, prayer, theological debate and discussion, and encouragement in their ministries. While Calvin's lectures and writings undoubtedly served as the primary framework for the day, the pastors themselves presented ideas and issues for theological reflection, discussion and prayer. Pastors at a distance from Geneva attended once per month, and wrote letters to their colleagues in between, requesting the advice and assistance of their peers. While Calvin would become troubled at times with the direction of the Consistory, the legacy of the Venerable Company of Pastors was one that brought him deep gratitude. The Company produced ministers who were seen as more passionate, well-informed, and dedicated to serving God and God's people than before the Company was established.

The 'presbytery,' as we know it, is a combination of the Consistory and the Company of Pastors. Presbyteries are composed of one minister and one ruling elder from each pastoral charge within the geographic bounds, in

keeping with Calvin's efforts to avoid 'clericalism.' Matters of administration and discipline regarding congregations and ministers are under the authority and oversight of the Presbytery, as is the examination and ordination of candidates for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament.

The 'other side' of Presbytery as practiced by Calvin—"Continuing biblical and theological education, mutual theological and ethical encouragement"—has almost disappeared as lengthy reports and debates surrounding business and administration matters overwhelm most Canadian Presbytery agendas. They are stretched to the breaking point as they attempt to deal with clergy and congregational conflict and crisis, often over geographic distances half the size of Switzerland. Inspired and inspiring discussions, biblical and theological study, vocational and personal support and encouragement often happen by chance at Presbytery and not by design—bereft of the careful planning and purpose in Calvin's establishment of The Venerable Company of Pastors.

As we look for hope in our denomination and our congregations, perhaps a renewal of the Presbytery with Calvin's 'genius' as a foundation would be a place to start. The ongoing renewal of those in leadership—both teaching and ruling elders—in some form of "Company" could well kindle fresh flames of the Spirit and a fresh passion and vision for our ministry and mission under Christ. What if Presbytery meetings intentionally included more time spent in worship, in Biblical study, theological education and spiritual formation?

Even as Calvin boldly pioneered the establishment of the Consistory and the Company in his time of Reformation, perhaps our time for reformation also requires such bold pioneers in the presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. ■

*Rev. Christine O'Reilly is minister at Knox, Thedford, Ont., and St. Andrew's, Watford, Ont.*



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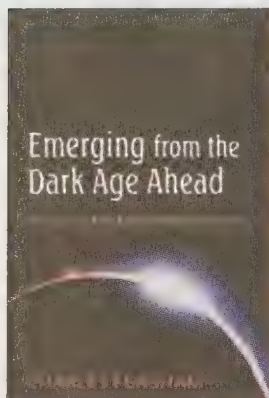
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# A Call for Community

Charles Fensham's book is richly informed and insightful. BY HAROLD WELLS



**Emerging  
from the Dark  
Age Ahead:  
The Future  
of the North  
American  
Church**  
By Charles  
Fensham.  
Novalis

Charles Fensham has given us a rich volume of theological reflection on the future of the North American church. In the introduction, he makes it clear the book is firmly based in the *poiesis* of the Bible, read according to a Christ-centered, liberationist method of interpretation. It is also deeply Trinitarian, drawing from the tradition of social trinity, going back to John of Damascus (8 CE), and associated today with Juergen Moltmann. He argues that if God, as Trinity, is not "one heavenly monarch," but a "community in loving relationship," this has profound implications both for the church as community, and for society as a whole. Besides deep roots in scripture and tradition, Fensham is also in dialogue here with many contemporary sociologists, philosophers, cultural critics, as well as biblical scholars and theologians. Fensham is professor of systematic theology at Knox College, Toronto.

The title borrows from Jane Jacobs's book *Dark Age Ahead*, which laments the loss of traditions of knowledge and wisdom in our time and place. While Jacobs has little to say about the loss of Christian heritage, the "dark age" for Fensham "refers fundamentally to the loss of memory, wisdom, meaning and moral ethic related to the reign of God" and the loss not so much of prosperity as of "more basic things that make us human."

Part I, *Where Do We Come From?*, is about reading the Bible for the present church. In conversation especially with David Bosch, South African missiologist and Fensham's teacher and mentor, his interpretive method (hermeneutical position) is rigorously Christ-centered and calls for an "expanded rationality," beyond the limits of both Enlightenment and post-modernist thought. Giving special attention to people on the margins, Fensham's hermeneutical approach is also clearly liberationist and pro-feminist.

Part II asks *Where Are We?* Here three chapters offer a socio-cultural analysis of our present time and place. Out of his own South African experience, Fensham speaks of a postcolonial world, acknowledging and valuing a global plurality of cultures and faiths. Christian mission must then be a "non-triumphalist" witness, respecting differ-

ence, and emphasizing justice and solidarity with those on the margins. He recognizes that we live in a post-Christendom time of declining members and influence, and of church institutions in crisis, combined with threatening ecological and economic circumstances. He is critical of the easy confidence in human technological mastery that characterizes North American culture. We see here the influence of Canadian theologian Douglas Hall. While this is a hopeful book, it is certainly not an optimistic one. In conversation with

We live today in a 'techno-expert manipulated future perfect' where we are called by our culture to 'Master It!'

cultural commentators like Jacques Ellul, George Grant, Walter Ong, etc., Fensham is deeply suspicious of the worship of "technique," extending itself today to "mastery by measurement and digitization." We live today, he argues, in a "techno-expert manipulated future perfect," where we are called by our culture to "Master It!," as well as Measure It, Manage It, Market It, View It, Observe It, Digitize It! Drawing richly upon fiction and poetry, he evokes the ways in which our consciousness is being transformed through television and the computer, and the way



the values of efficiency, productivity, measurement and consumer demand marginalize ethical concerns.

Over against this striving for mastery of our dominant culture, Part III, *Where Are We Going?*, offers a vision of an emerging church, grounded in the social trinity. This theology "redefines glory as constant self-giving, and turns the power of the creative Spirit into the power of mutual indwelling and mutual love, a [perichoretic] power always seeking power for the other."

Since the Christian faith and the church's life and mission must be rethought and renewed in every generation, Fensham seeks a new vision of church in a dark age unlike any other in past history. The pace of change in technology and global context calls for a new inculturation and inter-culturation, not simply to adapt or conform to our changing culture, but to challenge it as well. He notes that, in spite of declining membership and budgets, the once-established churches of North America are holding their own and even growing in some places. Yet a focus on measurable growth is a temptation to conform to the mastery of our time and its love of technique. We have to be suspicious of the goal of becoming a merely efficient, successful megachurch, for the dark age in which we seek to serve in a critical spirit is precisely an age of managing and marketing success, and the church must not mimic this. Rather, a church of the social trinity must see church growth and evangelism not as proselytizing, but as gracious welcoming and hospitality. And, must treasure relationships of mutual self-giving and dialogue. Such a community is essentially eucharistic, for "the Eucharist suggests a radical ethic and hospitality. This unconditional welcoming and embrace of the stranger is our call to be monastic pilgrim communities of evangelists-stewards."

What does our author mean by monastic church? Certainly he is not proposing a celibate community, or a replica of Benedictine or Franciscan orders. There are, however, elements of the monastic movements that served

well in other dark ages. For example, Celtic monasticism was a dynamic missional movement in northern Europe, with monks as protectors of knowledge in times of chaos and pillage. Generally, the monastic disposition of taking vows, forming communities, commitment to discipline, the balance of worship and prayer with labour, and radical hospitality, are all patterns that we could well emulate in our own time of human loss.

What does he mean by pilgrim church? Pilgrim people are on a journey. While the institutional church has, for a long time, thought of itself as being in a state and "ensconced in real estate," the church today, as in the early days, is invited to rediscover its pilgrim character and to travel with Christ on a way. We can find a "counter-cultural disposition" and be released from worry about long-term investments. "We can become lighter, more flexible and creative."

And what is a steward church? Stewardship is the opposite of mastery and technique. A post-Christendom and postcolonial church grounded in the perichoretic Trinity in our time will relate gently and respectfully to creation, linking, as Paul does, the suffering of creation and the redemption of humankind. The ethical demand of the "face of the other" (in the concept of Emmanuel Levinas) now includes the demand for the care of the earth, so that the Christian mission now includes the stewardship of creation.

Fensham, for all of this, is not anti-institutional. He recognizes the need for church order and structures. Seeing the need for well-educated Christian leadership and life-long scholarship, he writes insightfully about these dimensions of church life.

Altogether, the word to describe this book is rich—richly informed by broad and deep scholarship, richly alert to what is happening in the society and culture around us. ■

*Harold Wells is professor emeritus in systematic theology at Emmanuel College, Toronto.*

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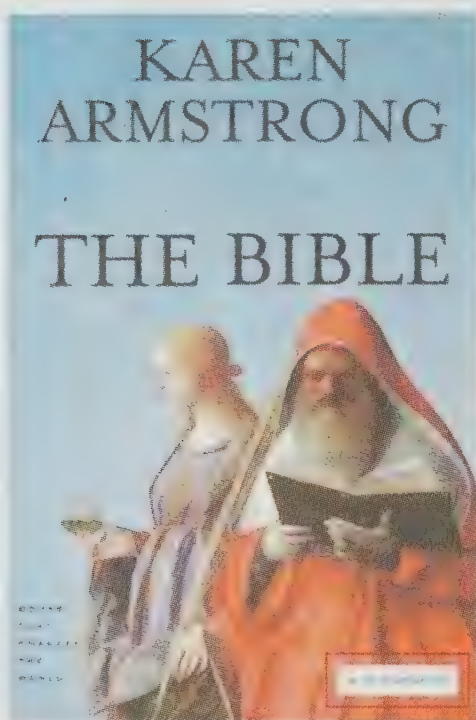
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# Intimations of Transcendence

Karen Armstrong pleads for a compassionate interpretation of the Bible. BY DAVID KILGOUR



## **The Bible: A Biography**

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John Vissers, principal of The Presbyterian College, Montreal, writing in the *June Record*, refers to a former colleague, who concluded that essentially two groups do most of the serious Bible reading: "Those of us who make it say whatever they want, and those of us who make it say nothing at all."

The jacket notes of Karen Armstrong's 2007 book, *The Bible*, estimated that more than six billion copies of the Bible have been sold over the past 200 years in more than 2,000 languages. Readers are also told

that the contents of Armstrong's work trace how this book of 66 books has been created by scores of people over hundreds of years.

The scripture of various faiths is being criticized today. For example, some Christians campaign against the teaching of evolution because it appears to contradict the creation account in Genesis. Some Jews use God's promise of Canaan (modern Israel) to the descendants of Abraham to justify oppression of Palestinians. Some terrorists use the Qur'an to justify atrocities. Armstrong therefore stresses entirely reasonably that it is more important than ever to be clear what scripture is and what it is not.

She notes that an exclusively literal interpretation of the Bible is a recent development. Until the 19th century, for example, very few readers imagined that the first chapter of Genesis was a factual account of the origin of life. For centuries, Christians and Jews alike insisted that a wholly literal reading of the Bible was neither "possible nor desirable."

The New Testament began as an oral proclamation and from the beginning had no single message. Later on, she notes, Bible interpreters "felt free to change it and make it speak to contemporary conditions ... the Bible 'proved' that it was holy because people continuously discovered fresh ways to interpret it ... exegetes continued to make the Word of God audible in each generation."

Armstrong likes Hans Frei, who says that the Bible has been a subversive document and suspicious of orthodoxy since the time of Amos. Even Calvin insisted that the Bible was not a scientific document and that those who wanted to learn about astronomy or cosmology should look elsewhere. Armstrong writes, "Human beings seek ekstasis, a 'stepping outside' of their normal, mundane experience. If they no longer find ecstasy in a synagogue, church or mosque, they look for it in dance, music, sport, sex or drugs. When people read the Bible receptively and intuitively, they found that it gave them intimations of transcendence."

The final page of the author's Epilogue deserves the last word: "An exegesis based on the 'principle of charity' would be a spiritual discipline that is deeply needed in our torn and fragmented world. The Bible ... is being distorted by claims for its literal infallibility; it is derided—often unfairly—by secular fundamentalists; it is also becoming a toxic arsenal that fuels hatred and sterile polemic. The development of a more compassionate hermeneutics could provide an important counter-narrative in our discordant world."

Amen! ■

*Hon. David Kilgour is a retired member of parliament. This is an excerpt of a breakfast talk he gave this past June in Ottawa.*



# Don't Wait to Apologize

Relationships trump anxieties of life.

BY REV. CHEOL SOON PARK

“Dad, why does this year feel like it's going faster than last year?” This was the question that my youngest son, Ted asked me one day. He was nine years old.

Does anyone have the answer to this question? Time really flies. Every morning, we are kindly reminded that the mighty Canadian winter is expanding its territory and we are moving closer to the end of year once again. Recently we have been flooded with news about the election, the crumbling economy and the fluctuating market. They make us worry or at least concerned. But I believe it is a good time for us to look back and reflect on the journey we have made throughout the year.

In my last pastoral charge, many members were involved in retail businesses like convenience stores. They started very early every morning and went to bed later than anyone else in the neighborhood. Many of them built up their assets not by making much money, but by failing to spare enough time to go out and spend it at leisure. One of the owners, “Mr. K.,” shared a story he experienced about this time of the year.

One tedious afternoon—sunny outside yet chilly wind sweeping the street—a middle-aged lady stepped into his store. She looked somewhat nervous, cheeks flushed and obvious signs of hesitation to speak on her face. He thought she was looking for some-

thing. So he welcomed her saying, “Hello, can I help you?” The lady tried to avoid eye contact with Mr. K. and still seemed to have some difficulty finding words. He waited. Then she finally turned her head around and looked at him straight. She appeared nervous yet resolute, and he noticed some tears in her eyes; a strange combination he thought.

She opened her purse and put money on the counter. “So, how can I help you today?” he asked. He was eager to serve this unusual customer.

But the next thing he heard was something he didn't expect from a regular customer.

“I want you to take the money.”

“Oh, it's nice of you but why?”

She explained, “Many years ago, when I was a teenager, I came to this store and, in the middle of crowded customers, I shoplifted a pack of cigarettes. I am sorry. I know that I shouldn't have done it, but I didn't know better.

“I know it may be too late and you are not the same owner. Yet I want you to take this money. I was struggling with this memory for many years. I'd like to resolve it now and make peace with myself, and if possible with you.”

Mr. K. accepted the money from the lady with thanks from his heart for her courage and effort to make peace. After a brief encounter, the lady stepped out of the store. She looked very happy and peaceful.



This incident made Mr. K think about his own journey. He said, “It reminded me of the most important thing in life. It is making peace with others and with myself before it is too late. And it is never too late.” He donated the money to a local charity. He said, “Even watching her doing it makes me happier. I think we all should do it.”

In the middle of hectic schedules, I'd like to remind you of the most important lesson of our lives. True happiness doesn't come from our possessions. Rather, it comes from meaningful relationships. And meaningful relationships are established on foundations of love and forgiveness. As we approach an even busier time of the year, let us look around and see if there are any loose ends that require repair or return. Let us go out and resolve them. You will be happy, content and thankful, even in the middle of the dancing economy.

Time really flies. Let us do it before it is gone permanently. ■

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Cheol Soon Park'.

Rev. Cheol Soon Park



# “더 늦기 전에”



“아빠, 왜 올해는 작년보다 시간이 더 빨리 지나가는 것 같아요?” 이 질문은 제 막내아이가 어느 날 저에게 던진 것입니다. 아홉 살짜리가 말입니다.

이 질문의 해답을 알고 있는 분이 계십니까? 정말 시간이 날아간다는 말이 실감나는 계절입니다. 아침마다 캐나다의 북극 겨울이 영토를 확장해 오고 있다는 소식을 듣습니다. 또 매년 돌아오는 연말을 행해서 한 발자국씩 가까이 가고 있습니다. 최근 세상은 선거, 불안한 경제, 그리고 흔들리는 시장에 대한 소식으로 홍수를 이루고 있습니다. 이런 소식이 우리를 걱정하게 하고 불안하게 만듭니다. 그러나 저는 이때가 오히려 지난 한 해의 여정을 돌아보고 생각하기에 적절한 시간이라고 생각합니다.

처음 섬겼던 목회지의 많은 교우들은 편의점 같은 소매업에 종사하고 있습니다. 누구보다도 아침에 일찍 시작하고 제일 나중까지 일하는 분들이었습니다. 사업을 통해서 돈을 많이 벌어서 재산이 형성되는 것이 아니라 돈을 쓸 시간을 가질 수 없어서 재산이 만들어지는 그런 삶을 사는 분들입니다. 그 중에 ‘K’ 선생이 어느 늦가을에 경험한 일을 나눈 적이 있습니다.

가을 햇벌이 따뜻해 보이지만 찬 바람이 길거리를 쓸고 다니는 한 지루하게 느껴지는 오후에 중년 부인이 가게에 들어왔습니다. 그 부인은 왠지 좀 불안해 보였습니다. 뺨이 불그스레한데다가 얼굴에는 말하기를 주저하는 표시가 역력했습니다. ‘K’ 선생은 그 부인이 구입할 물건을 찾는 것으로 생각해서 물었습니다. “뭘 도와드릴까요?” 그 부인은 “K” 선생의 눈을 쳐다보지 못하면서 여전히 할말을 찾지를 못하고 머뭇거렸습니다. 조금 시간이 더 지나자 그 부인이 드디어 고개를 들고 “K” 선생을 바로 쳐다보았습니다. 아직도 좀 불안한 기운이 있었지만 한편 단단히 마음을 먹은 듯한 모습이었었고 이유는 모르지만 눈가에 눈물이 젖어 있는 것이 보였습니다. 좀 이상한 모습이라고 생각이 들었습니다.

그 부인이 이어서 지갑을 열어 돈을 꺼내어 카운터 위에 놓았습니다. “뭘 드릴까요?” 늘 하듯이 전문적인 말투로 물었습니다. 그러나 “K” 선생에게 돌아온 말은 매일 대하는 손님들에게서 듣지 못하던 말이었습니다. “이 돈을 그냥 받아 주십시오.” 예상하지 못했던 말에 “K” 선생이 물었습니다. “오, 그냥 받으라고요? 이거 좋은 일이지만 왜 받아야 하는지요?” 부인의 설명은 이러했습니다. “제가 오래 전 청소년 시절에 이 가게에 들어왔었습니다. 사람이 많고 복잡했는데 그 틈을 타서 제가 담배 한 카톤을 훔쳤었습니다. 죄송합니다. 그런 짓을 하지 말아야 했는데... 제가 너무 철이 없었습니다.” “부인의 설명이 계속되었습니다. “시간이 많이 지나서 너무 늦었을 수도 있고 또 선생님이 그때 있었던 가게 주인도 아닌 것을 알지만 이 돈을 받아 주시기 바랍니다. 제가 이 기억 때문에 많이 고민했었습니다. 이제 이 문제에서 놓임을 얻고 싶습니다. 그리고 내

자신과, 또한 가능하다면 선생님과 평화를 만들고 싶습니다. “K” 선생은 그 돈을 받으며 부인의 용기와, 평화를 만들고자 기울인 노력에 대한 지정한 감사를 전했습니다. 잠시 후 그 가게를 떠나는 부인의 얼굴에는 이전보다 더 충만한 행복과 평화가 담겨 있었습니다.

이 일이 “K” 선생으로 하여금 자신의 삶을 돌아 볼 수 있는 기회를 제공했습니다. 그는 이렇게 말했습니다. “이 일이 인생의 가장 중요한 것이 무엇인가에 대해서 생각하게 했습니다. 그건 너무 늦기 전에 다른 사람들과 또 내 자기 자신과 평화를 만드는 일이라는 걸 깨달았습니다. 평화를 만드는 일에 너무 늦은 시간은 없지요. “K” 선생은 부인이 놓고 간 돈을 자선기관에 보냈습니다. “그 부인이 그렇게 노력하는 것을 보기만 해도 제가 행복해졌습니다. 우리가 다 그렇게 한다면 얼마나 좋을까요?”

이 복잡한 인생 여정을 지나가는 여러분에게 저는 우리 인생의 중요한 교훈에 대해서 말씀 드리고 싶습니다. 우리 삶의 지정한 행복은 우리가 얼마를 소유했는가에서 오는 것이 아니라는 것입니다. 행복은 ‘의미 있는 관계’에서 비롯되는 것입니다. 그리고 이 관계는 사랑과 용서의 기초 위에 만들어지는 것입니다. 이제 더욱 바빠지는 연말을 앞두고 우리 주변에 정리하고 회복해야 할 문제들이 있는지 한번 살펴 볼 수 있기를 원합니다. 그리고 함께 일어나서 이 문제들을 풀어갈 수 있기를 원합니다. 그렇게 한다면 여러분은 널 뒤통 등락을 거듭하는 경제 상황 속에서도 행복하고 만족하며 감사를 느끼게 될 것입니다.

시간은 정말 날아 갑니다. 그 시간이 영원히 가 버리기 전에 함께 해봅시다.



## Ministry Opportunities and Interim Moderators

### SYNOD OF THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES

Lower Sackville, N.S.; First Sackville and St. John's, Windsor, N.S.; Interim Moderator Rev. P. A. (Sandy) McDonald, 4 Pinehill Rd., Dartmouth, NS B3A 2E6; 902-469-4480; pamcdonald@ns.sympatico.ca.

Pictou, N.S., St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Jeanette Fleischer, PO Box 142, River John, NS B0K 1N0; 902-351-2219 (s) or 902-351-2473 (h); jen.fleisch@ns.sympatico.ca.

### SYNOD OF QUEBEC AND EASTERN ONTARIO

Beaconsfield, Que., Briarwood; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. John Vissers, Presbyterian College, 3495 University, Montreal, QC H3A 2A8; 514-288-5256 extension 201; jvissers@presbyteriancollege.ca. Gloucester (Ottawa), Ont., Gloucester; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Adrian

Auret, PO Box 609, Manotick, ON K4M 1A6; 613-692-4228; adrian.auret@sympatico.ca. Quebec City, Que., St. Andrew's; Full-time minister effective April 2009; Interim Moderator Rev. Giancarlo Fantechi, 106-97 Oxford Cres., Sherbrooke, QC J1M 2G3; 819-566-5962; gfantechi@sympatico.ca.

### SYNOD OF CENTRAL, NORTHEASTERN ONTARIO AND BERMUDA

Barrie, Ont.; Essa Road; Interim Moderator Rev. Heather Malnick, c/o Living Faith Community, 206 Murphy Rd., Baxter, ON L0M 1B1; 705-424-0779; livingfaith@zing-net.ca. Bermuda, St. Andrew's; Full-time ministry; Interim Moderator Rev. Bryn MacPhail, c/o St. Giles Kingsway, 15 Lambeth Rd., Toronto, ON M9A 2Y6; 416-233-8591; bryn31@rogers.com. Cambridge, Ont.; St. Andrew's Galt; Minister of Word and Sacrament, Full-time; Interim

**To announce your pulpit vacancy:**  
**vacancies@presbyterianrecord.ca;**  
**phone 1 800 619 7301 x308; fax 416 441 2823.**

Notices are \$40 for one-time; \$25 for four insertions or more. Deadline to have your notice added is six weeks prior to month; so, for September 2008 the deadline will be July 15th, 2008.

Moderator Rev. Bill Bynum, c/o St. Andrew's Galt, 130 Victoria Ave., Cambridge, ON N1S 1Y2; knoxpreston@golden.net.

Coldwater, Ont.; St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Karen Horst, 200 Maple St., Collingwood, ON L9Y 2R2; karenh@georgian.net. Englehart, St. Paul's; Tomstown, Ont., Tomstown; St. Paul's and Tomstown Pastoral Charge, approximately 10 km. from Tomstown; Full-time minister; Search Committee Chair Randy Ford, PO Box 737, Englehart, ON P0J 1H0; treeline@ntl.sympatico.ca.

## Employment Opportunities

**To place an ad call**  
**Carol McCormick**  
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**cmccormick@canadads.com**

## ST. ANDREW'S COLDWATER, ONTARIO IS SEEKING A MINISTER OF WORD AND SACRAMENTS

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Having enjoyed strong ministry and continuous growth in faith and service, we are seeking a Minister of Word and Sacraments who is adventurous, compassionate and creative to lead us into the future. We are

seeking someone who appreciates blended, flexible worship and lay participation.

St. Andrew's is an inclusive, family oriented church that is looking for leadership development as we reach out to the next generation. With a regular worshipping congregation of approximately 80 people, we look forward to our next phase of ministry together.

**Interim Moderator: Rev. Karen Horst**  
**karenh@georgian.net 705-445-4651**

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PETERBOROUGH ONTARIO

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Position guide is available online at [www.stpaulspeterborough.ca](http://www.stpaulspeterborough.ca) or from the church office at (705) 745-1411

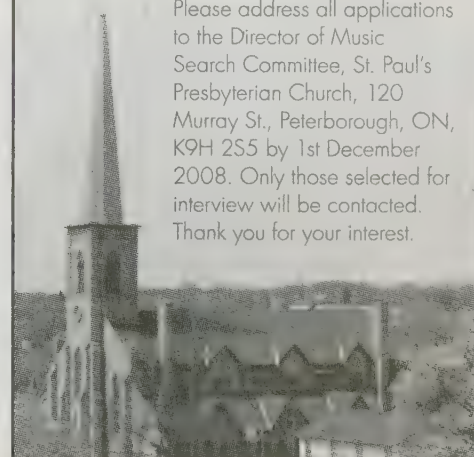
Please address all applications to the Director of Music Search Committee, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 120 Murray St., Peterborough, ON, K9H 2S5 by 1st December 2008. Only those selected for interview will be contacted. Thank you for your interest.

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# VACANCIES

Markham, Ont., St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Don Muir, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON M3C 1J7; 416-441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301 ext. 223; dmuir@presbyterian.ca; www.standrews-markham.ca/search.htm.

Mississauga, Ont., Dixie; Interim Moderator Rev. Reid Chudley, PO Box 16, Hillsburgh, ON N0B 1Z0; 519-855-6216; r.chudley@bellnet.ca.

New Liskeard, Ont., St. Andrew's; Full-time minister, single-point charge; Search Committee, PO Box 908, New Liskeard, ON P0J 1P0; 705-647-8401; standrewsnl@parolink.net.

Nobleton, Ont., St. Paul's; Interim Moderator Rev. Chris Carter, 13190 Keele St., King City, ON L7B 1J2; 905-833-2325; cmcarter@rogers.com.

Peterborough, Ont., St. Giles and South Monaghan and Centreville; Full-time minister for two-point charge; Interim Moderator Rev. Paul D. Johnston, 22 Hillview Dr., Bobcaygeon, ON K0M 1A0; 705-738-6424; knoxpres.paul@bellnet.ca.

Peterborough, Ont., St. Stephen's; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald, c/o Knox College, 59 St. George St., Toronto, ON M6S 2E6; s.macdonald@utoronto.ca.

Scarborough, Ont., Clairlea Park; Half-time minister; Interim Moderators Robert and Priscilla Anderson, 174 Springdale Blvd., Toronto, ON M4C 1Z7; 416-469-5986; kimchiman21@hotmail.com.

Scarborough, Ont., Westminster; Interim Moderator Rev. Ann Blane, 1300 Danforth Rd., Scarborough, ON M1J 1E8; 416-267-7897.

Schomberg, Ont., Emmanuel; looking for a half-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Jeremy Lowther; 905-857-2419; jlowther1845@rogers.com.

Toronto, Ont., Beaches; Interim Moderator Rev. Alex Bisset, 662 Pape Ave., Toronto, ON M4K 3S5; 416-850-7531; wabisset@rogers.com.

## SYNOD OF SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

Binbrook, Knox and Carluke, St. Paul's; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Garfield G. Havemann, c/o Chedoke Presbyterian Church, 865 Mohawk Rd. W., Hamilton, ON L9C 7B9; ghavemann@chedokechurch.ca.

Brantford, Knox and Mt. Pleasant, Mt. Pleasant; Interim Moderator Rev. Donald Young, 11 White Oaks Ave., Brantford, ON N3R 5N8; greenbrier@bfree.on.ca.

Fort Erie, St. Andrew's-Knox; Search Committee Chair David Randall, 495 Niagara Blvd., Fort Erie, ON L2A 3H2; 1-888-665-6681; drandall@cogeco.ca.

Glencoe, Glencoe Burns; Interim Moderator Rev. Kathy Fraser, c/o North Caradoc-St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 8503 Scotchmere Dr., Strathroy, ON N7G 3H3; 519-245-8769; kfraser001@sympatico.ca.

Hamilton, MacNab St.; Rev. Stephen Jenvey, c/o West Flamborough, 262 Middletown Rd., Dundas, ON L9H 5E2; 905-628-6675; minister\_wfpc@bellnet.ca.

London, St. Lawrence; Half-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Lynn Nichol, 783 Victoria St., London, ON N5Y 4C9; 519-434-2476; briarhill33@yahoo.ca.

Mitchell, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Catherine Calkin, 3403 Perth Rd. 130, R.R. 2 St. Pauls, ON N0K 1V0; 519-393-6395; calkin@quadro.net.

Niagara-on-the-Lake, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Martin Wehrmann, c/o 515 Scott St., St. Catharines, ON L2M 3X3; 905-646-0616; maw49@hotmail.com;

www.standrewsniagara.com/26122.html.

Port Dover, Knox and Hagersville, St. Andrew's

(two-point charge); Interim Moderator Rev. Kathy Morden, Knox Presbyterian Church, 2058 Main St. N., Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0; 519-587-2565; knoxchal@bellnet.ca.

Simcoe, St. Paul's; Rev. Dr. Stan Cox, Interim Moderator c/o St. Paul's, 85 Lot St., Simcoe, ON N3Y 1S4; 519-426-1845; sppc@kwic.com; www.stpaulssimcoe.com.

Thornbury, St. Paul's; Rev. Ted Creen, 865 2nd Ave. West, Owen Sound, ON N4K 4M6; 519-376-7886; ted.creen@standrewsowensound.org.

Thorold, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Graham Kennedy, 53 Church St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 3C3; 905-641-8868; gkenedy@niagara.com.

Tiverton, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Susan Samuel, 345 Durham St., Kincardine, ON N2Z 1Y6; 519-396-2311; ssamuel@bmts.com.

Wallaceburg, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Mike Maroney, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 60 Fifth St., Chatham, ON N7M 4V7; 519-352-2313; maroney@firstchatham.org.

## SYNOD OF MANITOBA AND NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO

Brandon, Man., First; Interim Moderator Rev. Paul Sakasov, 338 11th St. E., Brandon, MB R7A 5W7; 204-727-2385; paul@pcbrandon.com.

Carberry, Man., Knox-Zion; Interim Moderator Rev. Jean Bryden, 808 9th St. NW, Portage la Prairie, MB R1N 3L3; 204-857-4815; jrbryden@mts.net.

Flin Flon, Man., St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Peter Bush, 197 Browning Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3K 0L1; 204-837-5706; peterwwpres@mts.net.

Portage la Prairie, Man., First; Interim Moderator Rev. David Wilson, 22 Linden Blvd., Brandon, MB R7B 1B9; dwilsguy@mts.net.

## SYNOD OF SASKATCHEWAN

No vacancies

## SYNOD OF ALBERTA AND THE NORTHWEST

Calgary, Alta., Trinity; Interim Moderator Rev. David Vincent, 56 Scenic Rd. NW, Calgary, AB T3L 1B9; 403-547-7700; dave.barbvincent@shaw.ca.

Edmonton, Alta., Callingwood Road; Interim Moderator Rev. Bob Calder, 6607 31st Ave., Edmonton, AB T6K 4B3; 780-462-2446; crpc2007@gmail.com.

## SYNOD OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

North Vancouver, St. Andrew's and St.

# Employment

## IS THIS YOU?

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\*You are able to make the Word of God relevant.

\*You have a heart for missions.

*Are you ready to help us become fishers of men, women and children?*

## KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Wallaceburg, Ontario

Is Seeking a Minister.

Contact: Interim Moderator Rev. Mike Maroney,

c/o First Presbyterian Church, 60 Fifth St. Chatham, ON N7M 4V7 519-352-2313

maroney@firstchatham.org

HELP US GROW IN CHRIST



Stephen's; Rev. Dr. Brian J. Fraser, Interim Moderator, 1402-1327 East Keith Rd., North Vancouver, BC V7J 3T5; [fraser@growingchurches.org](mailto:fraser@growingchurches.org).

Slocan Valley, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Gavin Robertson, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 1139 Pine Ave., Trail, BC V1R 4R2; 250-364-0335; [firstpc@telus.net](mailto:firstpc@telus.net).

Vancouver, Kerrisdale; Co-Interim Moderators Revs. Joyce and Glen Davis, 6040 Iona Dr., Vancouver, BC V6T 2E8; 604-822-9807; [gdavis@vst.edu](mailto:gdavis@vst.edu).

Victoria, St. Andrew's; Full-time assistant minister, three-year call; Convener Search Committee Colina Titus, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 680 Courtenay St., Victoria, BC V8W 1C1; 250-384-5734; [colina.titus@gmail.com](mailto:colina.titus@gmail.com).

## Obituaries

**ARNOLD**, Irene, a long-time member of Mount Pleasant Presbyterian, Mount Pleasant, Ont., passed away on Sept. 7, 2008, at the age of 82 years.

**BREMNER**, Dr. R. Gordon, Aug. 1, 2008, in his 81st year. Gordon was a founding member of St. Giles Kingsway, Etobicoke, Ont., and served as an Elder for 50 years until his retirement in January 2008. Gordon graduated from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, in 1950 and was a dedicated and respected family practitioner for more than 45 years.

**FLOOD**, Wilma, a long-time member of Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church, passed away on Feb. 9, 2008, at the age of 97 years.

**GRIBBEN**, David, a long-time member of Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church, passed away on Aug. 25, 2008, at the age of 45 years.

**MANN**, Frederick, a hard-working adherent of Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church, passed away on April 30, 2008, at the age of 82 years.

**THORNBORROW**, William Edward, a dedicated elder and a long-time member who was very active in the life of Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church, passed away on Feb. 2, 2008, at the age of 71 years. ■

# *The future is in your hands . . .*



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## *Planting seeds of hope. For generations to come.*







# Called to Wonder

CREATED BY ERIN WALTON

## From Nothing to Something

Did you know that the poppy (or *papaver rhoeas*) grows profusely in the trenches and craters of old, abandoned war zones? Artillery shells and shrapnel stirred up the earth and exposed the seeds to the light they needed to germinate. Isn't that amazing? Isn't God amazing – taking a dusty, abandoned battlefield and turning it into something beautiful and alive?

Only God's power could create something out of nothing; to turn a deserted battlefield into a sea of peaceful beauty. He did the same thing when he created the entire universe out of nothing – in just seven days!

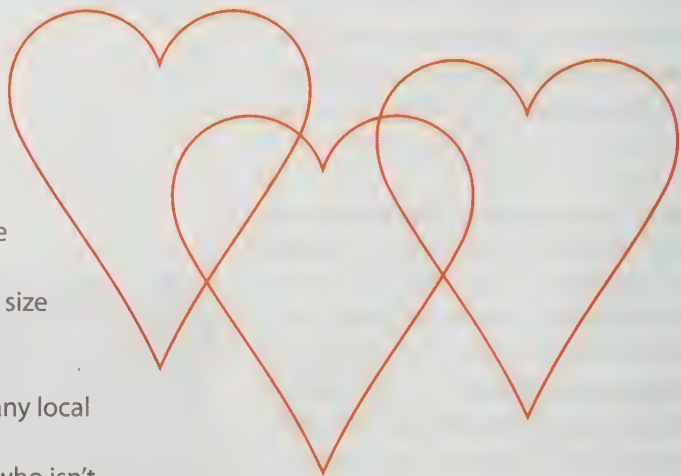
The poppy is worn as a symbol of Remembrance Day. But it means more than just remembering, it is a symbol of faith and hope too: faith and hope in each other that we will choose peace over war, and faith and hope that God will one day bring peace to the world.

### Little Know Fact

In November, 1921, the first poppies were distributed in Canada to be worn on Remembrance Day.

## From the Heart *Make your own poppy!*

- Draw 4 small hearts on a piece of red construction paper.
- Cut each of them out and glue all four together at the base of each heart.
- Cut out a black or green construction paper circle (approx. size shown here).
- Glue the circle onto the middle of each poppy.
- Glue on a magnet fastener or pin fastener (both found at any local craft store) on the back of the poppy.
- Make extras and give them away when you see someone who isn't wearing a poppy.



*Dear God, Thank you for reminding us that your power can create beauty from war, can transform death to life, and will bring us peace in your time. Amen*



# FOR THE JOURNEY

For the Journey, continued from page 50

It's a time of great loon excitement. It seems to be an accepted fact that you have to run before you can fly, at least in the loon world. The truth is, several months of workout or training is absolutely crucial for something as un-aerodynamically designed as a loon to claw its way against gravity over the tremendous heights of the

have always thought about the Christian life in terms of "being" a disciple of Christ. There is a finality in that notion. To be quite frank, in terms of "being" a "finished" disciple of Christ, I am not very finished yet. As to being a disciple of Christ, I am like the young loon on our lake; I kind of look like one, I kind of sound like one, I kind

Several months of workout or training is absolutely crucial for something as un-aerodynamically designed as a loon to claw its way against gravity

Coast Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. The truth is, during their summer molt when they could not fly, the loon parents had actually been training too, running on the water and frantically flapping their wings, apparently just to keep in shape. And by doing this in front of their chicks all summer long, the loon parents had taught their young how to train. Loons seem to know that if you train enough to fly, actual flight follows naturally.

Training, working out, practicing: it's crucial in every endeavour from music to loon flight. The Apostle Paul holds it up as a crucial part of the process of running the race of Christian discipleship. In the athletic games of Paul's Greek world, training was not only important but a non-negotiable requirement. A long period of intense training was mandatory for anyone who planned to participate in the Isthmian games held every two years at Corinth. And so, Paul writes to his nestling Christians in Corinth about Christian discipleship and says: "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever." (1 Corinthians: 9-25)

Paul is waxing metaphorical, of course, but his point seems clear enough: The Christian life is training to receive the crown of life—life eternal. The Christian life is training to fly. This is a new thought for me. I

of act like one, but God only knows I am not ready to fly yet. In the light of my recent loon lesson and my new thought about discipleship, I can do one of two things. I can beat myself up over not being fully developed, or I can get excited about training and go at it hard. I think I will choose the latter. It's the biblical way, the grace-filled way.

In any training endeavour, it's important to know your weakness. Very often, in terms of my Christian life-training, I am well aware of my weaknesses. The Holy Spirit seems to do a good job of pointing them out to me, and if the Spirit is not willing, God knows the saints are always ready to take over. Sometimes this process seems more than a little bit disheartening. But the reality is that being aware of a weakness is not a negative thing—it's a positive thing. It tells you precisely where to work in the training process, where to focus. I like the way Paul puts it in another place: "I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven." (Philippians 3:13-14) ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry.*



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# Loon Lesson

BY DAVID WEBBER ILLUSTRATION BY E. APRIL CALLIS

**"T**hat loony chick ain't going to make it!" I said to Linda. It was a cold November day and I was watching a particularly small teenage loon out of our front room window. It had been born late in the spring; hence its diminished size and my concern.

"I don't get it," I said. "The adult loons were the model of perfect parents all summer. They fended off every kind of danger from Sea-Doo to eagle talon. And then, come early autumn they just waltzed off for their winter seaside home leaving their kid

all alone on our lake to fend for itself. What really burns me up is the adults didn't even bother to teach their kid how to fly before they left. It's only another month or so until freeze-up and loon chicks don't make very good popsicles."

"No," Linda said, as she looked fondly at the young loon floating serenely past the end of our dock. She had been left to babysit the young loon many times in late summer and early fall as she sat by the lake in her favourite Adirondack chair. "They didn't teach that young loon how to

fly, but they taught it how to train."

Linda was right, of course. Before the loon parents left for the winter, they had taught their chick how to train so that it could learn how to fly. This is the way of the loon. And so, at the beginning of November, all of the loon chicks hatched on our lake, regardless of their size or development, are now at the stage of extensive training. They are racing up and down the lake, flapping their wings furiously whilst running on top of the water and hollering their loony heads off.

continued on page 49



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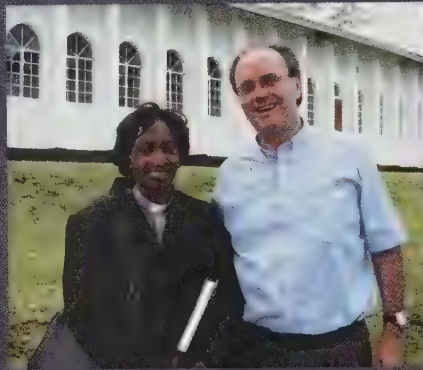
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# HAPPY SHOVELLING

A child of the rectory remembers Christmas in Nova Scotia. BY DAVID HARRIS

I remember a lot of white Christmases. I remember them for one reason: shovelling out the church and rectory.

I'm sure I remember more such years than a meteorological history would confirm, but such is the exaggeration of an only child of a rectory.

Christmas, after all, is positively the busiest time of the year. In Anglican liturgical rank it may only be fourth, but in popular terms Christmas is tops, meaning numerous church services starting in the late afternoon on Christmas Eve and ending Christmas Day sometime.

A bit of snow on Christmas Eve was nice. Anything more than a dusting, however, meant me shovelling, since my father was busy getting ready for or taking services. There was no recovery period until after the 10 a.m. Christmas Day.

First, there was the path from the back of the rectory to the church. No sweat there, as it was only maybe 30 feet. Then there was the church driveway. It was somewhat longer, maybe 50 feet? Whatever the distance, it seemed like half a mile to me in my early teens.

And then there was our driveway and then two or three neighbours, mostly older women, and the parish hall. Well, you get my drift, if you'll pardon the pun. I think I was nearly as exhausted as my father by noontime.

And then there'd be a death. It happens a lot at this time of the year. The stress of cold and family gatherings, too much food and drink. I don't know all the factors, but a lot of people pass away around Christmastime, meaning clergy are always ducking in an out of festivities to cope with grieving relatives.

By the time we moved to a larger city parish when I was 16, I had been a church organist for about five years and was lucky enough to get a church a few miles up the road from my dad's.

Both of those churches had professional snow removal contracts, so the shovelling was a lot less BUT ... the organist at dad's church wanted me to play for the family services at 5 and 7 pm so she could conduct the choirs.



I spent Christmas Eve zooming back and forth between churches, trying not to leave music in the wrong place.

It's funny though. I might play the big David Willcock's setting of O Come All Ye Faithful four times that evening and each one was just as thrilling as the others when I kicked the Full Organ piston for the massive chords at "Word of the Father Now in Flesh Appearing."

I'd attack the keyboard with a passion—perhaps it was the pianist in me trying to make the organ sound louder (which, of course, you can't do!). But there's no kick quite like being (just)

in control of a pipe organ at full throttle in a packed church.

If it goes as it should, you know you're standing the hair up on the back of hundreds of necks. And they'll remember it better than the sermon!

I'm back living in a rectory again (although our own home for the first time). Now, I'm the clergy spouse, making this 32 years and nearly 50 Christmases in rectories in Nova Scotia, England and Ontario.

I suspect any PK (preacher's kid, as we are fondly referred to) could swap places with any denomination and we'd be perfectly at home with some priest or minister racing off to a service, a funeral or to find some cubbyhole to write another sermon.

It's a rare perch from which to see how people cope with the joys and stresses of this time of the year and to see the annual theatrical event which somehow always comes together in the end to help give even just a little glimpse of the true meaning not merely of Christmas but of life.

All of us at the Record hope you enjoy this issue with its stories of Christmases from around the world and the spectacular drawings from our many contributors. We hope that reading this magazine will help you prepare for the coming of the Prince of Peace. ■

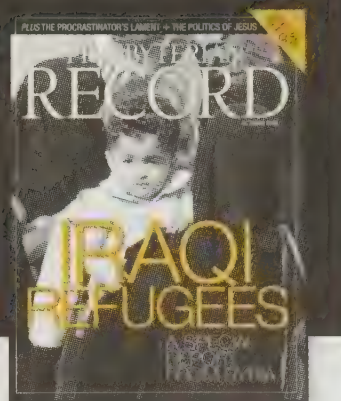
Sincerely,

David Harris



# Letters

letters@presbyterianrecord.ca



## A Historic Tradition

*Re The P in PCC, September*

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has a long history of receiving ministers from other churches and welcoming graduates from other theological colleges. It is disappointing, therefore, to read a letter which questions their motivations and contributions. As I read it, the letter-writer is asking us to set aside the historic inclusive ecumenical welcome that befits the gospel and has characterized our traditional Presbyterian church at its best. While he obviously feels that this impoverishes our church, many are of the opinion that it strengthens us. And let's remember: those who come from other churches and theological colleges are vetted by presbyteries and the Committee on Theological Education and often required to undertake additional studies at our own theological colleges.

In the future, the *Record* might wish to consider whether it is appropriate to print letters that make unprovoked and unsubstantiated allegations against an identifiable group of ministers within our denomination. Surely we are better than that.

JOHN VISSERS, PRINCIPAL,

THE PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, MONTREAL

## Our Apology

Dear readers,

Please accept our sincere apologies for the lateness of the October issue. Putting a magazine together each month is a fine balance, and we fell off the beams for October. By missing one deadline, we missed several, and a domino effect of delays proceeded. Our apologies to you.

It is a greater pity because we are

very proud of the issue itself, especially of the powerful cover article by Rev. Glynis Williams on Iraqi refugees in Syria, the Theology of Politics by Dr. Sam Wells, the fascinating Calvin series article by Judith MacLeod, the charming exchange between a young student and professor emeritus on the theology of procrastination, and, of course, the usual thoughtfulness of Rev. David Webber.

DAVID HARRIS, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER,  
THE PRESBYTERIAN RECORD

## His Father's Name

I was wondering if any of your readers could enlighten me about the significance of the given names Edwin Ruthvin or Edwin Ruthven amongst Presbyterian men. That was my father's name, my great uncle's name and, after googling these combinations of given names, it seems, quite a few other Presbyterian men.

JON LITTLE, HINTON, ALTA.

## Beyond the Binary

*Re Peace and Compassion, September*

The letter evidences a generous, tolerant spirit. However, I am still concerned about the binary thinking that informs much of the debate over sexual orientation and church issues.

The fashionable academic left-liberal reductionist-materialist hard-line evolutionist point of view and the Christian fundamentalist viewpoint occasionally have some things in common. If a sensitive boy or young man has affectionate feelings for a member of the same sex in any context whatsoever, they will each say, under rigid binary thinking, that he is condemned—by heredity, ➤

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genes and brain chemistry on one side, and by original sin and predestined total depravity on the other—to go over to a completely homosexual lifestyle in an urban gay ghetto and stay there forever.

To be sure, some Christian non-Calvinist fundamentalists and conservative evangelicals believe that homosexuals, by surrendering their lives to Christ, can change to a traditional heterosexual lifestyle, but they still think in binary terms of gay and straight.

The Kinsey report on male sexuality, published in 1948, posited the view that maybe half of the population is completely heterosexual and maybe six to 10 per cent more or less completely homosexual. However, it noted there is a gradation of people between those two poles of orientation which he described as being along a scale of one to seven. Those who were completely heterosexual were 1 and those completely homosexual 7. In between were those at 2, who were

interested in the same sex one-sixth of the time and members of the opposite sex five-sixths of the time, and those at 6, who were interested in the same sex five-sixths of the time and members of the opposite sex one-sixth of the time. Kinsey, a dedicated scientific researcher, said it is not possible to neatly separate people into sheep and goats when it comes to sexual orientation. Yet, a half century later, this research is usually ignored, and even boys or young men who just make an occasional glance at a member of the same sex are immediately assumed to be, and condemned as (and even attacked for) being homosexual.

Under this type of outlook, the friendship of David and Jonathan as described in I Samuel would, if expressed in the modern-day, lead to them being beaten up and left for dead in a lane behind a bar in Brooks, Alta., or Shelby, Mont. (I Samuel 20:17, "For he (Jonathan) loved him (David) as he loved his own soul.")





SARAH FRASER 8, FIRST THUNDER BAY, ONT.

A rational approach to the issue of homosexuality, or what is perceived as such in the church, will require a major revision of the binary thinking on the topic that prevails today.

PALL STRICKLAND  
PRINCE GEORGE B.C.

I take great umbrage at the opinion that the Bible contains "time- and culture-bound passages of scripture."

I thought that the Bible was all God based and inspired, not the ramblings of someone with an agenda that would lead people to take it so lightly.

Also the comment on inclusiveness in regards to people's colour or women in churches does not lead one to seek a passage in the Bible to support the reason for exclusion.

LINDY MCQUEEN, BURNABY B.C. ■

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What are the folks at Duff, Puslinch, Ont., doing in a remote reserve nearly 600 kms. north of Thunder Bay, Ont.? It's a wonderful story and you can read it in detail online: [presbyterianrecord.ca](http://presbyterianrecord.ca)



Carol Anderson has been the choir leader and organist at New Westminster, Hamilton, Ont., for 21 years. Upon her retirement she was named Music and Choir Leader Emeritus for her heartfelt dedication, care and commitment to a ministry of music. She also got a cake; her husband Tom looks on.



Rev. Alice Wilson has been the minister at St. Andrew's, Hanover, Ont., for the past near 18 years. On her last Sunday before retirement in September, the children brought in the elements and helped prepare for Communion. It seems a fitting metaphor. On our website, you can see her cake.



One of the street missions featured in the *Record* in February was Fernie House. Paul Cornish served 29 years as executive director of this special mission, moving it from two to six houses. At his retirement board member emeritus Blair MacKenzie presented him with a letter of congratulations from the City of Pickering. More photos on our website.



"When we're enthusiastic we brighten their day," Emily Aitken told the *Mount Forest Confederate*. "And the congregation's encouragement keeps us enthusiastic," added Allie McCorquodale. Along with Rebecca Parker and Carlee Wilson, these youth group leaders led worship one Sunday this May at the three points of Knox, Holstein, Knox, Ayton, and Amos, Dromore, Ont. "This was the first time we led a service for all three," Katelynn Watson told the local newspaper. (Katelynn is missing from the photo, which is courtesy of the *Mount Forest Confederate*.)



### And on our website:

A fascinating history of Melville, Riverside, B.C.; a handmade library cart in Caledon, Ont.; a scenic Sunday in Niagara, Ont.; 93 kids, one VBS, in Nova Scotia; Iora Sloski honoured for 60 years of service in Milton, Ont.; Rev. Ian MacMillan's 20 years at St. Andrew's, South Lancaster, and St. Andrew's, Martintown, Ont.; a prestigious club at St. Andrew's, Brampton, Ont.; learn how a wedding anniversary in Simcoe, Ont., leads to a bursary at Knox College, Toronto; and, also see a mortgage burning at St. Paul's, Simcoe, Ont.; and, you may remember them from last year—the Farmer's Market ladies from Summerland, B.C., were back at their booth raising \$\$\$ for PWSD!



## SPOTLIGHT

Nicole Morrow's unique fundraising drive for Evangel Hall was more than mere cosmetics. The mission-minded teen wrote a fundraising proposal on behalf of Evangel Hall for the Toskan Casale Foundation's Youth and Philanthropy Initiative, which was established by the tycoons behind Mac cosmetics. Morrow was amongst the winners and a cheque for \$5,000 was received by Evangel Hall. A fuller story is available on our website—seen here is Morrow with the Hall's executive director Joseph Taylor.



# Mission of Justice

Guantanamo inmate needs protection. BY CONNIE PURVIS

AFTER MORE THAN SIX YEARS of detainment in Guantanamo Bay, 41-year-old Djamel Ameziane is "in urgent need of protection" according to a coalition of human rights organizations. The stigma of the former Montreal resident's suspected links to terrorism put him at risk of imprisonment and torture if he returns to his native Algeria, they allege.

The Anglican Diocese of Montreal has submitted an application for Canadian resettlement; should it meet with success, Action Réfugiés Montréal, a joint ministry of Anglican and Presbyterian churches, will help Ameziane re-establish himself in Quebec. Glynis Williams, director of Action Réfugiés Montréal and refugee director at PWS&D signed the sponsorship on behalf of the bishop. Ameziane is currently among approximately 50 detainees who have not faced formal charges or trials in the U.S.

"The refugee sponsorship ... is part of the church's mission of justice and compassion in the world," said Rev. Barry Clark, Anglican Bishop of Montreal in a press release. "Having read what Djamel has suffered and the risk he would

face if returned to Algeria, I am convinced that sponsoring him is the right thing to do."

His application has been filed through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program and is backed by Amnesty International, the Canadian Council for Refugees and the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights.

Ameziane sought refugee status when he resided in Canada during the 90s, but in 2000 his claim was rejected. He was arrested in 2002 when he tried to enter Pakistan from Afghanistan, and he was subsequently sent to the United States by Pakistani forces. The Pentagon has accused him of having connections to al Qaeda, which Ameziane denies.

In August, Ameziane filed a petition with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights addressing torture and human rights violations perpetrated against him during his detention. At the time this article went to print, the IACHR was scheduled to hear the precautionary measures of his case on October 28. ■—with files from the Centre for Constitutional Rights ([ccrjustice.org](http://ccrjustice.org))



# PCC Website Refresh

BY COLIN CARMICHAEL

THOSE WHO VISIT the denominational website—[www.presbyterian.ca](http://www.presbyterian.ca)—regularly will have noticed that throughout October and November we made some significant changes. Most obvious is a completely new home page layout that we hope will make it easier for our visitors to find the information and resources they are looking for—and discover new things they don't even realize exist! We also made some significant changes to the navigation structure so that information is grouped more appropriately.

The feature I'm most excited about is SnapShots. This relatively large area in the upper-right quadrant of the home page is intended to offer glimpses into the denomination at the congregational and agency program level—the grassroots of the PCC. Photos in the SnapShots area are randomly selected from a collection of photos of church buildings, congregations and Presbyterians in action.

As pleased as I am with this makeover, I can't take very much of the

credit—most of the work was done long before I arrived. The members of the Life and Mission Agency's internal web strategy team deserve the bulk of the credit for guiding this process over the course of the summer. My thanks to Alex McDonald, Karen Plater, Anne Phillips, Matt Donnelly and Peter Johnson for their work and support as the website continues to evolve.

The website refresh, and SnapShots in particular, are representative of my desire and intention for the communications activities of the PCC to encompass the entire denomination. [Presbyterian.ca](http://Presbyterian.ca) is a website of and for the denomination, not just national offices, and I am committed to extending that philosophy to the broader communications strategy for the Life and Mission Agency. ■

—Colin Carmichael is Associate Secretary, Communications at the Life & Mission Agency of the PCC. He chronicles his work on his official PCC blog at [www.beingpresbyterian.ca](http://www.beingpresbyterian.ca).

## WICC Turns 90

THE WOMEN'S INTER-CHURCH COUNCIL of Canada marked its 90th anniversary this October.

It began with a letter dated October 19, 1918, written by WMS treasurer Bessie MacMurchy letter inviting members of denominational Women's Missionary Societies to assemble and organize a national prayer meeting. This led to the creation of WICC, a national ecumenical movement committed to uniting women in prayer and action for justice around the world.

The anniversary celebration was themed Widening The Circle, and encouraged members to "respond to the changing face of Canada" by

examining racial, social and religious justice concerns across the country, and work in partnership with marginalized organizations and communities.

WICC's best-known initiative is the annual World Day of Prayer. Donations raised through the event and a sister organization, the Fellowship of the Least Coin, are distributed as grants to grassroots organizations promoting justice and empowerment. This year, 11 national and 29 international grants were administered, amounting to \$70,500 total.

WICC garners members and financial and spiritual support from the Presbyterian Church and 10 other church partners. ■—CPurvis

## BUILDING HOPE

### How Big Is Your Family?

**Our family is so big that, in 2007, we gave:**

- 40 turkeys
- 98 boxes of cereal, jars of peanut butter, canned hams, juices
- 312 boxes of macaroni & cheese, cans of soup, vegetables, fruit, tuna or salmon
- 346 presents & mitts, gloves, scarves, hats
- 1,656 mandarin oranges
- 1,872 tea bags



All who attend programs at WICM are considered family. We share the joy of Christ's birth with the gift of a Christmas hamper. Some food and presents are received on White Gift Sunday and others are purchased with donations.

**Your contribution to WICM enables us to assemble these gifts for our family.**

*"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35*

**Merry Christmas, Happy New Year & Thank You!**

**Winnipeg Inner City Missions Of The Presbyterian Church In Canada**

P. O. Box 2444, Station Main  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4A7

**Flora House** 204-586-5494

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204-942-8682

Charitable registration: #862942554RR0001



# Christian Distributor Closes

Dark days ahead for the religion book market.

BY CONNIE PURVIS

R. G. MITCHELL Family Books, Canada's largest Christian book wholesaler and retailer, declared bankruptcy in early September leaving over 150 unsecured creditors and \$9 million in liabilities. The 74-year-old company has remained tight-lipped about reasons for the closure, and its sudden shutdown left many booksellers scrambling to find alternative distributors.

"It's been crazy," said Harold Maier, owner of Heritage Christian Bookstore in Niagara, Ont. With churches gearing up for a new Sunday school year and Christmas on the horizon, it was not a good time to lose a main supplier, he added.

The bankruptcy was another blow among ranks of struggling Christian distributors. It followed weeks after major Canadian music distributor CMC Distribution was acquired by David C. Cook Distribution Canada, a division of Colorado-based David C. Cook Publishing. And the Blessings chain of Christian bookstores filed for credit protection last year, declining from 27 stores nationwide to four in B.C. only in January.

Denominational retailers have also taken hits. The ailing Anglican Book Centre was swallowed by American Lutheran publisher Augsburg Fortress last year, and 2008 has seen Christian bookstore closures in Halifax, North Sydney and Montreal. Competition from discount chain stores, online purchasing, and a declining Anglican population have been cited as root causes.

The Presbyterian Church's Book Room has been in the red for many years and relies on funding from the



WMS to keep afloat.

The blame falls on a strong Canadian dollar. Wholesalers and retailers alike purchased stock from American distributors when their dollar was high, but when it plummeted retail prices followed suit. To stay competitive, companies were forced to sell the same items for 20-30 per cent less, resulting in a dramatic drop in profits.

## The bankruptcy was another blow among ranks of struggling Christian distributors

"It was a double whammy," said Blessings owner and CEO Mark Hutchinson. "We saw that signs were bad, but we reacted and made a move quickly." The chain completely restructured its business model, decreased its number of locations and expanded the range of products on its shelves. CMC Distribution likewise entered into talks with David C. Cook Canada last October, and the company's staff and structures were integrated earlier this year. Mitchell's may not have adjusted to market trends, and may not have acted fast enough, Hutchinson said.

Store rental costs may have been another factor in Mitchell's down-

fall, suggested Steve Nicolle, former President and CEO of CMC Distribution and current Director of the Music and Media Division of David C. Cook Canada. Most struggling retailers have been in larger urban markets, and over the past year many stores have closed in cities like Calgary and Edmonton. Mitchell's operated a number of retail stores before the bankruptcy, including two former Blessings locations.

A strong dollar has meant cheaper books for consumers, but that does not mean people buy more books or purchase them at stores, said Susan Clarke, manager of the Book Room at national offices.

Although the Book Room accepts online and telephone orders, and provides free shipping across Canada, "it seems like people's first reaction is to go to Amazon," she said.

"The problem we have in Canada is, although we're a huge geographic country, we're no larger than California in population, but we try to function with as many distributors as in States," Hutchinson said, suggesting that fewer distributors carrying a larger range of products would be a more viable model. Given recent trends, that may become reality. ■



# Experience Mission in Malawi

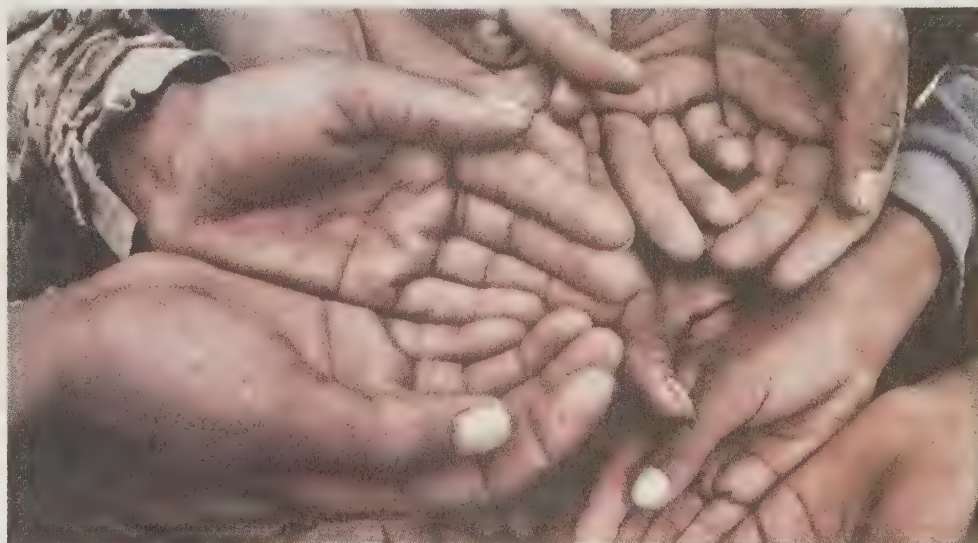
Travel by DVD to Blantyre and Livingstonia.

BY CONNIE PURVIS

STEWARDSHIP AND EDUCATION for Mission has produced an opportunity to *Experience Mission in Malawi* via DVD. When this issue went to print, it was slated for release in early November and featured two 10-minute segments exploring the role of Presbyterian Sharing and Presbyterian World Service and Development in ongoing Malawian missions.

*We Are In This Together* looks at collaborative mission between the Presbyterian Church and the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, and highlights the work of two Malawi synods—Blantyre and Livingstonia. It also features interviews with Glenn Inglis whose Letter from Malawi will be published in the *Record* for the next few months.

Our Response To AIDS is an update

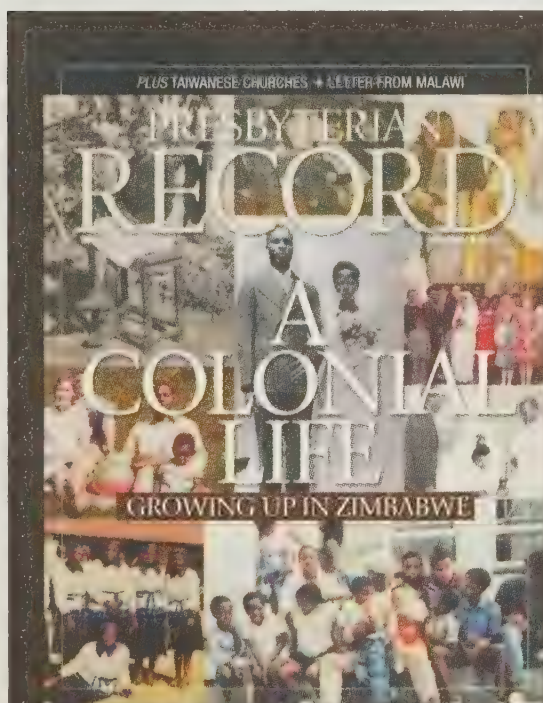


on the World Without AIDS Campaign. Although the campaign has officially ended, the video explores its ongoing work in the heart of the pandemic. Among other things, it features a training centre for the caregivers of

AIDS orphans.

Bonus features include a number of Minutes for Missions and Presbyterian choirs performing traditional music.

The DVD can be ordered through the Book Room. ■



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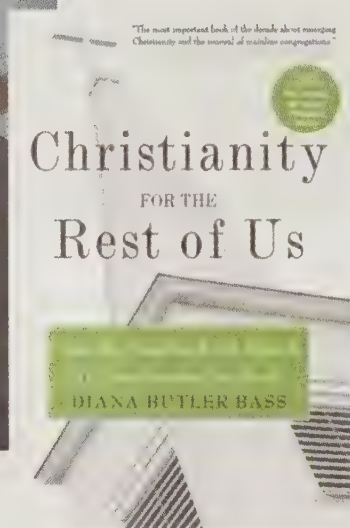


# Nostalgia Kills Hope

Diana Butler Bass encourages churches to look ahead. BY MICHELLE MILLER-GUILLOT



Diana Butler Bass brings her message to Canadian Presbyterians in February.



CONSTANTLY SEARCHING for new ways of fulfilling our vision statement of being a vital and growing community of faith, some members of Rosedale, Toronto, read Diana Butler Bass' book *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith* (reviewed in the *Record*, March 2007) over the summer to prepare for her visit with us next February. To meet her and scope out her workshop style, my husband and I went to hear her speak in October. I had identified with much of what she says in her book. I'm a liberal "quiet Christian" and a not-yet-30-year-old member of Session.

I am concerned about the vitality and growth of our denomination and more specifically of my own congregation. We talk of needing to do things differently. Throughout her research, Butler Bass found that change contributed to the increased vitality of what

she refers to as "mainline" churches.

In her workshop, Butler Bass implied that Presbyterians are in denial. We know change is required, but believe it can wait and occur later under someone else's direction. This rang true to me. As much as I wanted to believe that I was an agent of change within my own congregation, I realized I was only talking about it. She told stories of congregations, some of which are Presbyterian, that have transformed themselves and become more full of life. This gave me hope and made her presentation exciting.

Butler Bass assured us that if we really do believe that God's hands have anything to do with us being here, then He thinks that we are capable of handling it. "Nostalgia is the enemy of hope. People need to know that there's more exciting stuff ahead." Instead

of brainstorming ways to attract new members, congregations first need to focus on keeping the ones they have. What kind of community is God asking us to be in relation to where we are now? Throughout her research, Butler Bass found that congregations which intentionally engaged Christian practices found new vitality.

Butler Bass speaks of liquid modernity: Established religion; disestablished spirituality. People care less and less about the established church and are moving away from structure which no longer resonates with them. Therefore she suggests we have to rethink our traditions—many of our practices have no sense of intentionality. Because I joined the church as a teenager and only spent a year in Sunday school, I never learned how to pray or how to read the Bible and it wasn't until a short time ago that I learned the importance of both.

"Think depth, not breadth," Butler Bass preaches. Which means we must sharpen our own actions. One of the most important of which is hospitality. People become more grounded through intentional actions. The church needs to pay attention and address everybody's spiritual needs.

I'm looking forward to hearing Diana Butler Bass speak at Rosedale, Toronto, the weekend of February 27, 2009. I believe my congregation needs to hear her message in order for our church to grow, we need to embrace the time in which we live and ask ourselves what kind of community God is asking us to be in relation to where we are now. As soon as we begin to ask questions such as this one, we might just find ourselves growing again while providing people with a sense of hope and excitement for the future. ■



# The General Disease

Its also known as the Thinning Disease. BY GLENN INGLIS

IN JULY OUR WATCHMAN DIED. We had known Kondwani since 1980 when the Synod appointed him to keep an eye on our house. When we returned to Blantyre in 1997, Kondwani left the Synod to work full time with us. Those who have visited 'Canada House' know of whom I speak. Kondwani officially died of malaria, but everyone knew the underlying cause was HIV/AIDS. Malawians seldom mention AIDS but speak rather of 'our general disease' or 'the thinning disease.' Some years ago, Kondwani and his wife separated and eventually reunited a couple of years later. She died of 'the general disease' and so Kondwani's situation was not a surprise.

Linda and I were visiting Kondwani at the hospital one day. Because his condition was deteriorating, the nurses had moved him off his bed onto a mat sandwiched on the floor between two other beds which carried patients with a better chance of survival. The ward was chaotic with family members trying to administer food or water to the sick while determined charismatic preachers were shouting that the sick and wounded should repent so God could heal their bodies. We finally found Kondwani when Linda noticed his young wife with tear-filled eyes watching over him. On her back was a new born baby. Three weeks before Kondwani's death his wife gave birth to a lovely baby girl.

The lot of widows is seldom kind. Kondwani's wife will take her two young children to her home village some 50 kilometres away. There she will have no job and no means of support save the generosity of the extended family. What will happen to her? What future will the girls have? Because of our long-standing association with the family, these are questions we will somehow strive to answer.



**A coffin seller sits on a coffin while waiting for clients in Blantyre, Malawi. Coffin shops are found at almost every corner on the streets of Blantyre.**

The latest UN report indicates a lowering of the HIV infection rate in Southern Africa. In Malawi the rate is now 12 per cent. But this rate applies only to ages 14-49 and in urban areas the rates can go upwards of 30 per cent. Through exceptional international efforts, anti-retroviral therapy (ART) is widely available. However, only about one-third of the people who need the drugs are taking them. A huge problem

is the lack of trained medical staff in rural areas. The nursing profession is one of the hardest hit by AIDS. Also, hundreds of Malawian nurses have been recruited to the UK where life is decidedly better. ■

*Rev. Glenn Inglis and his wife Linda are working in Malawi thanks to International Ministries. His letter will continue in the Record for a few more months.*





## Endeavour Together

**ENI**—Christian communities should improve their knowledge of Islam, be good neighbours to Muslims and bear witness to their faith in an appropriate manner, 50 church leaders and experts said in a joint statement.

They noted that Christians have seen Muslims both as friends and rivals, neighbours and strangers. There has been a history of "mixed" relationships between Christians and Muslims, with both positive and negative dimensions, the World Council of Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches leaders said in a joint press release.

"In spite of the significant growth of Muslim-Christian dialogue and relations, Muslims and Christians continue to misconstrue each other's religion," Catholicos Aram I of the Armenian Apostolic Church, a former WCC moderator, told the consultation in a keynote address. "We must endeavour together with our Muslim neighbours to consolidate our commonalities, which ensure wholeness and integrity, and we must preserve our diversities, which enrich community."

## Illegitimate Debt

**ENI**—People in the poorest countries are being forced into poverty by having to repay hundreds of millions of dollars of

illegitimate loans from wealthy Western countries to greedy dictators, an international meeting has heard.

"They have seen how scarce public revenue is diverted to debt service obligations and away from social welfare and infrastructure investment ... [and] observed the ways in which the lives of successive generations of children can be mortgaged to the greed of a dictator," said Rev. Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation.

Speaking at a symposium in Oslo on debt, Noko noted that lenders who offer loans under conditions that do not guarantee democratic accountability, "should bear the risks of their decision, and should not be entitled to 'bailouts' from international financial institutions."

Representatives of governments, churches and their partner agencies, United Nation bodies, civil society organizations and legal experts were among participants at the symposium jointly organized by the Lutheran World Federation, the Church of Sweden and Norwegian Church Aid, in October.

## McCullum Remembered

**ENI**—Hugh McCullum, a Canadian journalist who championed Africa, where he spent part of his life, is being remembered as a harsh critic of what he called the silence of the media about the killing in 1994 of 800,000 people in Rwanda.

"We in the church press didn't care enough to write about it and when we finally did, it was defensive and apologetic and never named the 'genocidaires' amongst our denominations who preached hate Sunday by Sunday and unleashed a horror the world has not seen since World War II," McCullum once wrote about Rwanda. He died in Toronto in October aged 76.

"We Africans owe him a huge debt of love as he generously devoted many years of his life and work to the betterment of our continent," said WCC general secretary, Rev. Samuel Kobia.

McCullum wrote the September 2004 story on Stanford Reid for the *Record*.

## Morally Bound to End Conflict

**ENI**—WCC general secretary, Rev. Samuel Kobia, told a gathering of the Bible Society in Sri Lanka's commercial capital that churches are morally bound to act to prevent conflicts and to build peace.

"Prevention of conflicts, peacemaking and peace building are moral imperatives for the churches and for civil society," said Kobia in a speech in Colombo during his first visit to Sri Lanka, where a 25-year conflict between government forces and autonomy-seeking Tamil rebels has claimed more than 80,000 lives.

"I am left with the chilling feeling that this country sits on a social time bomb," Kobia said after hearing from church and civil society leaders of the island nation.

Kobia said, "The trauma is deep and so is the bitterness. All these, one could say, are the consequences of a protracted civil war, but the fact is that the hatred, the bitterness, the pain are still there and one cannot wish them away or ignore them."

The Geneva-based WCC brings together 349 Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other churches.

## Offense against God

**ENI**—The United Reformed Church in Great Britain has condemned as "an offence against God" the assassination of Gayle Williams, a 34-year-old Christian aid worker in Kabul, and the chilling comments of those who said they killed her.

Rev. John Marsh, moderator of the general assembly of the United Reformed Church, said in a statement, "It is deeply sad and sickening that Williams has been deliberately targeted as a Christian, and gunned down in the streets of Kabul. She had been welcomed into Afghanistan, and was working with a trusted organization, bringing skilled assistance to people with disabilities."

Williams, a dual national of South Africa and Britain, worked with disabled children. On October 20, two men on a motorcycle gunned her down as she walked to work in the Afghan capital. ■



# کرسمس مبارک

BY ANDREW FAIZ

## Christmas in Pakistan

**W**e had Christmas Trees; a Fir tree, most likely, my mother recalls. But to get to us in Karachi or Lahore it would have traveled a long distance from the Himalayan Mountains. We would cover it with the usual baubles; along with hand-made paper chains and other decorations. Under it would be the presents. And then Father Christmas would come late one night after church and a sumptuous meal of curries and rice.

In Lahore one year we went to Naulakha Church for Christmas morning. Across the aisle from us was a couple. They seemed lost. As the offering was called the woman began to play with a corner of her sari. The plate went past her; she and her husband were disappointed and ashamed.

Later my father explained they were likely from a village and had made a pilgrimage to a cathedral for Christmas. To be safe the woman had tied her annual tithes—what my father called a “few annas” or pennies—into a corner of her sari. But, since they didn’t know the order of service, and were not literate, they didn’t know when the offering would happen. When it was announced the woman began undoing a knot she had made too tight in her anxiousness. My father said they would likely return the next year to make the offering again.

The Presbyterian Church of Pakistan was constituted at Naulakha in 1993; though it has been around for at least a century. My maternal grandfather was one of the first indigenous Presbyterian ministers and taught at Gujranwala Theological Seminary, in Punjab province. My mother grew up on the seminary grounds; and it’s my grandfather’s genes that keep me glued to the Presbyterian Church, despite my Canadian inclinations. That’s a sort of Christmas story, I suppose; a constant birthing and rebirthing. (Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Synod of United Presbyterian Church, North America, both have long legacies in Pakistan.)

But, it’s my Anglican roots from my father I recall mostly.

In Lahore I went to the school attached to the Cathedral Church of the Resurrection. Every morning, rain or shine, we would gather in the central square, sing *All Things Bright And Beautiful*, get our announcements, chastisements and encouragements and go to class. My mother had been a teacher there before having children and returned there when her kids were ready. I was seven or eight when we moved to Lahore and my most vivid memories of my Pakistani childhood involve Cathedral, the surrounding neighbourhoods of Anarkali and The Mall and the Empress Road neighbourhood where we lived in a faux-Christian corner on Nicholson Road.

**When I think of my childhood my memories are entirely colonial—singing *All Things Bright And Beautiful* and waiting for Father Christmas**

It is Christmas I recall at Cathedral: each year a magnificent pageant, with live animals. I remember watching it for the first time, enthralled—this may have been the birth of my fascination with theatre. The next year, I was in the pageant, a shepherd boy. Being part of the show wasn’t as interesting as watching it, of course. We sat around a lot and couldn’t watch the show. But my parents were beaming and that’s what a little child can do.

Did I mention that Pakistan is a primarily Muslim country? When I think of my childhood Christmases, my memories are almost entirely colonial. I was third generation Christian; our traditions were borrowed from the Brits and from the predominant culture in which we lived.

We would order dozens of Christmas cakes from a local baker and these we would give to friends and neighbours. In their turn our Muslim neighbours would give us gifts on their Eids. That’s how I remember it—maybe they were better times or these are just the rosy memories of a child. Then one day things weren’t like that anymore and we came to Canada and a different kind of colonialism. ■





BETHANY MORTON, 13  
GLENCOE, WEST LORNE, ONT.



# Christmas Around the World

## Christmas in Korea

BY NAM SOON SONG

## 성탄을 축하합니다

*Joy to the World, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
... And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing*

**I**n the very early dawn of a very cold winter, carol singing, going around to each church member's house, began Christmas Day when I was young in Korea. This tradition still remains in some parts of Korea. On my first Christmas day, young members of the church came to my house door with singing, but I could not welcome them since my parents were not Christians. I had to pretend to sleep, feeling guilty, and that feeling comes back to me every Christmas. Even though I could not welcome the singers and share the joy with others, it is still one of my unforgettable memories in my life.

Christmas in Korea is celebrated at the church, not in the family home. Of course, Christmas is a holiday for all, which does not mean anything except that it is not a working day for most people. We see Christmas trees and Santas at shop-

ping centres and shops, and in front of city halls. We see many parents buying Christmas gifts for their own children; many young couples buying and giving heartfelt gifts to their lovers, and mail delivery people carrying and delivering Christmas and New Year's greeting cards. We see these scenes everywhere in this secular world.

But Korean Christians celebrate Christmas at church, not at home. It is the busiest season for the church. Every church prepares Christmas presents with children and special Christmas carols with young people and adults. Since the family does not celebrate Christmas at home and many of them do not prepare gifts for the children, every church also prepares little gifts for all children and some churches for adults as well. But most of all, it is a season to think about those who are in need. Almost all churches prepare gifts to visit those who are in need, in places like prisons, military ➤





bases, orphanages or seniors' homes. "Happy Christmas with the underprivileged" is a slogan for all.

There was neither a Christmas tree nor wrapped gift boxes at home, but hidden Santas with warm and generous hands. There was no special meal with roast turkey at home, but delicious rice cake soup at the church. Writing these memories of Christmas, I smell fresh sweet rice cakes which we, executives of the Senior High School Christian Association, delivered to the military base and the prison near our high school. And I picture children, especially their yearning eyes, whom I encountered at orphanages in those days. I picture elderly people who were weary from waiting for their loved ones at their seniors' homes. I see Salvation Army baskets and hear the sound of a bell asking us to be a Santa. I also taste the rice cake soup our church made for the feast for all the members of the congregation.

Walking along every street, I already see beautiful Christmas trees with special lights, red suited Santas, and special sale signs with Christmas music. Everyone seems to be busy with buying gifts for loved ones. This year Christmas will come to the church and to shopping centres, but I wonder whether the Baby Jesus has a place to be laid down or not. ■

## Christmas in Jamaica

BY JOYCE GLADWELL

# Good Feeling

**I**n rural Jamaica, where I grew up seven decades ago, going to church was at the heart of Christmas in my family. In my memory the night was moonlit or bright with stars, the air warm and soft, as we walked home together after the midnight service on Christmas Eve. Sounds of merriment were distanced by the hilly country as our neighbours set off fireworks in celebration. I felt secure and satisfied because the preparations were over, the baking and preserving done, gifts of new clothing and food distributed to the poor, and our parents, who taught school and served in church and community, were at leisure at last. The feasting and visiting could now begin.

We walked to call on friends, since we had no car. We walked for miles, stopping on our visits to sample their Christmas cake and sorrel—the bright red drink made from the sorrel plant, spiced with root ginger and brown sugar, and laced with rum.

For entertainment, there were the street dancers—*john cunnu* we called them. Like the mummers of northern Eng-

land, they were in disguise: one wore an ass' head, men wore skirts, and all had brightly coloured costumes and headdresses with beads and feathers. Everyone was prancing and twirling to the beat and sound of drums and pipes.

Once or twice our parents introduced the semblance of a Christmas tree—its branches bare of greenery, wrapped with foil to represent frost, and stuck with balls of cotton wool to mimic snow. There were no presents under the tree; there were no candles or ornaments. It was someone else's custom, and it was not a success. Why did they bother with a fake when the widespread branches of the live Poinciana tree flamed with blossom, the red-headed poinsettias made a hedge taller than a man, and citrus fruit ripened pale yellow against glossy dark green leaves?

Going to an Anglican boarding school enriched my experience of Christmas. In this culturally British community, set down in the hills of Jamaica, the students took part in plays and pageants, were introduced to flaming Christmas puddings with silver coins tucked inside, and, an enduring legacy for me, a wider range of Christmas





ANDREW O'BRIEN, 12

music than the meagre fare of the church hymnal.

It was in England as a young adult that I began to make sense of traditional Christmas practices. The short dull days of winter, damp and bereft of either sunshine or snow, begged for lights and decorations, rich food and the hurry and anticipation of shopping.

It was there also, in my husband Graham's English family, that I was introduced to the ritual of extreme gift-giving. The families of aunts and uncles lived within a short distance of each other. There were some 15 cousins in all, each one expected to have a present for every family member. The gifts were small—England had barely emerged from the Second World War. A bar of soap or a packet of chocolate was dutifully wrapped, inscribed and added to the pile in front of the fireplace. We sat around while Grandpa handed out each gift: "To Auntie Mollie, from Sean," and so on, he intoned. The gift was unwrapped, thanks and kisses exchanged, and the next gift was taken from the pile.

As the family numbers increased, the time spent and

the tedium of opening gifts grew, until someone brave put a limit on the practice: gift giving would be kept within the nuclear family. When cousins got together they would celebrate in different ways. One year, I recall, we wrote and performed a charade about the family.

Here in Canada, well out of range of World Wars and rationing, I am struck by the extravagance of Christmas: generous gifts offered beyond the family circle, packaged with perfect wrappings; lavish decorations indoors and out; advertisements for shopping that begin in October; partying that lasts from November to New Year's Eve.

One of the Christmas songs I learned here in Canada begins: Where Is The Child? I take this question with me as I look toward Christmas this year in Jamaica. As I consider the pattern of my childhood, I look for what was central to the practices of our parents, and in so doing I come to my resolve: whatever we decide about feasting, gift-giving and celebrating, we, their descendants, and those gathered with us, will take time to worship the Christ Child together. ■





RACHEL HAMILTON, 11  
ST. MARK'S, CHARLOTTETOWN



TIMOTHY HOOGSTEEN, 11,  
DANIEL HOOGSTEIN, 8,  
ADAMSETTLE, 12  
KNOX, BURLINGTON, ONT.



CHRISTINA DAHDAH, 11  
CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW  
AND ST. PAUL, MONTREAL



## GLORY TO THE NEWBORN KING





## Christmas in Taiwan

BY LILY YEN

## 聖誕快樂

**T**here's no Christmas in Taiwan, or at least no Christmas in the same way you think of it here. Only five per cent of the population is Christian; the rest are Buddhist or atheist, so there's no national recognition and no big celebrations. It's not a national holiday (although a party holiday happens to coincide with it) and celebrations are modest even among Christian communities.

I grew up in Tai-nan, a city in southwestern Taiwan. It's where Presbyterian missionaries first entered the country and established theological schools. As a result it's part of the "Presbyterian South," so called because Presbyterianism is more pervasive there than in the rest of the country.

Presbyterians celebrated Christmas on the fourth Sunday of Advent. We didn't mark the first three Sundays in any particular way. There was no special food. And we didn't get together with our extended family. Christmas was an exclusively church holiday and we spent it with our church family.

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, there would be a service including a Christmas pageant presented by the Sunday school. Afterwards, Santa Claus may show up and give a present to each child. We had a Santa Claus myth, but it was very commercial and not all Presbyterians liked it.

There wasn't really a gift exchange. Santa would give his presents to the children, and sometimes they would get a present from their parents. My parents usually gave me only one gift, and it was only during years that they remembered. Some years they remembered, and some years they didn't. Christmas wasn't a big holiday for us. I think Chinese New Year was the closest thing we had to the huge celebrations that accompany Christmas in Canada and Denmark.

I remember one year that my husband, who is Danish, and I spent Christmas in Taiwan. He was astounded at how little we did to celebrate it. My grandfather has a tradition of gathering everyone together each night and reading a few passages from the Bible. On Christmas Eve, my hus-

band asked him to read the Christmas story from the gospel of Luke. Until he made that request, my grandfather had completely forgotten that it was Christmas Eve!

Canadian Christmas was a bit of a culture shock, but my biggest shock was spending Christmas in Denmark. Every day there's something happening! Now that I have a family in Canada, we keep Danish traditions at home, although I'm still active with my Taiwanese church. ■—as told to Connie Purvis

NANA YAW OKU AMPOFO, 3  
GATEWAY COMMUNITY, TORONTO





# Merry Christmas

**A**s a child growing up in rural Jamaica, I found Christmas a very exciting time—a lot of fun. I looked forward to getting a new dress to wear to church on Christmas Sunday. Christmas chorals would be coming from every radio as early as November. The men would be standing or walking with their transistor radios on the highest volume. One could feel the fever in the air. It was a time of getting together with families and friends to celebrate more than just material things, of which we didn't have much, but rather life. The Christmas story was a meaningful and essential part of my life as a child. While we knew that our little gifts did not come from Santa Claus, because we did not know such a person, we knew that Jesus was the reason for Christmas.

Almost every adult would get Christmas work in the community under the 'crash program' given to the peasants by Public Works. This work ranged from a few hours to a few days. The men would cut the grass and trim the trees along the roads, while the women swept and gathered the rubbish, so the roads could be clean for Christmas. This was a chance for some to be able to buy a good Christmas dinner. I remember the women with their brooms in their hands and the men with their machetes waiting to start cutting the grass, while the women swept the street.

Almost every yard had whitewashed (snow-looking) stones and every house had new curtains (that was a must). The girls had little white dolls and boys little toy trucks or cars. The sound of music could be heard from every child

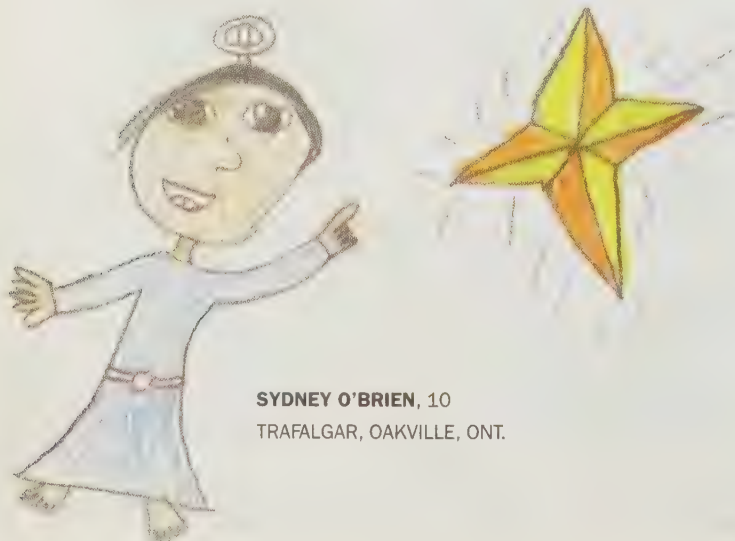
via mouth-organs, whistle, bells and horns; you could tell it was Christmas.

Grand-market was a place where Christmas shopping climaxed. People gathered there like sand on the seashore. Being from farming communities, their main source of income was by selling their ground-produce. Most of the women sold their produce in the market to get money for their Christmas shopping. Then they would go home with lots of meat and fish to prepare for the big day. My mother would be up very late frying fish and marinating meat and finally putting up the new curtains for Christmas day. Christmas Eve was one of the busiest, and stores of every kind would be open until very late in the night, while some streets would be closed so people could travel safely and freely. There was much music and a variety of street activities. Christmas was the atmosphere.

Christmas morning church service was at six. The order of service would be shorter with lots of carols. Then everyone headed home to start cooking.

Food was a significant part of the Christmas celebration. The traditional menu consisted of curried goat and rice and peas for Christmas dinner. Most people in the rural area where I grew up would butcher the goat(s) on Christmas morning. The number of goats depended on how big the family or the gathering was. There was also the goat 'belly' soup or 'manish' water. Breakfast would be a combination of dishes such as ackee and salted fish (cod), which is our national dish, with fried dumplings and/or cooked green bananas with steamed or escoviech fresh fish, or goat liver/kidney and hard-dough bread. Jamaican black rum cake was a must, which would be baked a week or two prior to Christmas, along with sorrel, a Jamaican Christmas drink. As a child, my Christmas gift was always a little white nurse doll.

My first Christmas in Canada, was different, of course. It was cold and the ground was covered with beautiful white snow, and we spent Christmas indoors. I could stand outside in Jamaica and look up in the sky at the stars; in Canada, looking from inside, I could see only ice hanging from the trees. But the taste of Jamaica was always there when all the siblings and other family members gathered at our sister's home for the traditional Jamaican Christmas dinner—curried goat with rice and peas, a slice of black cake, a cup of goat 'belly' soup. ■



SYDNEY O'BRIEN, 10  
TRAFALGAR, OAKVILLE, ONT.



## Christmas in Ghana

BY ELLISE AMENU

# Blonya Na Mi

**I**t is usually an expression of genuine incredulity—you celebrate Christmas?

Yes, we do. Not only do we celebrate Christmas, but it is one of the public holidays observed in Ghana. Though a purely Christian event, it is observed by Ghanaians of all creeds as a season of family togetherness, goodwill, and great festivity.

It was that nostalgia that prompted our trip to Ghana for Christmas 2007. After a 14-hour flight, we landed at Accra's Kotoka International Airport.

The next morning found us at Makola market, the hub of the country's retail business activity. Located in Accra, the market has just about every commodity, from current electronic gadgets to designer clothes. It was not a prudent decision to go there. Hoards of shoppers choked the entrance to Makola. We nudged each other, slowly edging forward and repeatedly saying "Ago, ago" ("Can I pass?") each step we took. Then there was what I described as the bargaining factor; one look at us and the sellers knew we were 'foreign Ghanaians.' The cost of goods suddenly quadrupled!

I was tired of Accra already, fed up with its busy-ness and clutter. At about one in the afternoon, we piled into my sister's SUV to head to our home town, Peki. It is in the towns and villages that the Christmas celebration is of great significance. As we settled down for the 90-minute drive, we told *Kweku Ananse* stories and sang carols in the spirit of the season. Upon arrival, I noticed busloads of celebrants had already arrived. Relatives, some waiting for hours at the local lorry stations, hugged each other and wished each other "Blonya Na Mi!" ("Merry Christmas to you all!").

Our car navigated a slight hill, and we saw our burgundy gates as they flew open in anticipation. We were home for Blonya! Family members, some of whom had been in the kitchen preparing the meal, rushed to hug us with shouts of "Atuu, Atuu, Miawoezor" ("welcome"). As we unpacked, the rich aroma of sumptuous Ghanaian dishes rose to meet us. We felt very welcome indeed.

The 24th night celebrations began with traditional drumming and dancing. We grabbed our video camera and went to the schoolyard where the local folks offered free entertainment, including cantatas and concerts. Forget the jet lag. We were all very awake now; even my grandson was caught up in the celebratory mood.

We joined hands dancing the *borborbor* and the *agbadza*.

We were lost in that moment of common purpose, neighbourliness and bliss. I had forgotten how inclusive and communal Christmas celebrations are in Peki. The dancing continued until about 11, when church-goers went to attend the midnight services. Around candlelit pews, we sang carols to usher in the birth of Christ.

We hardly slept—the house was full of childish ecstasy as children rose early, bathed, and were ready for their gifts. It was Christmas morning, a time that all children look forward to. Wide-eyed, with excited chuckles, they tried on their new clothes. There was indescribable joy as our gifts, wrapped Canadian-style, were unwrapped one after the other.

We then attended a brief solemn meeting where relatives who had passed away during the year were remembered. ➤

KATHRYN POZIOS, 5, TRAFALGAR, OAKVILLE, ONT.





Prayers were offered and libation poured for their souls.

The church was overflowing with people when we arrived. A small palm tree, decorated by local children, formed the Christmas tree. During the service, children enacted the nativity scene and some recited passages about the birth of Christ. It was the height of the Christmas celebration, as the children, immersed in their own realities, became the focus of the day.

The festivities continued after the church service and family feasts. Children literally went from door to door, showed

off their new clothes and wished households *Blonya Na Mi*. In return, they received biscuits, soft drinks, and money.

In the afternoon, we again flocked into the yard, where young adults on stilts entertained the crowd. Then the music boomed and the beat reverberated into every home. We danced and danced and ... this is heaven!

There are some who dance only once a year and it is at Christmas. To them, another dancing season was over. We just experienced the true meaning of Christmas—sharing brotherliness and love. *Blonya Na Mi!* ■

## Christmas in Burma

BY WAHLAY RAY

# Tha Ku Ler Krit Oh Plan

I grew up in Panaehperkho, a village in the mountainous regions of Karen State, Burma. Our village was one of several in the area.

Christmas was a joyous time of year for me. It brings back very special memories. I remember that it wasn't too cold at that time of year, but there would be frost on the ground.

Even before Christmas, we had a special celebration for "Sweet December." On December 1, we would have a night watch—which means we wouldn't sleep—and at midnight we would all yell "Sweet December!"

I was part of a children's choir, and from then until Christmas we would go on carolling trips from village to village. We went to non-Christian villages as well as Christian ones, and sometimes we would stay there overnight. Often the villages would give us things like pumpkins or cucumbers, or some money. And sometimes, when we caroled for Christian families, they would invite us into their homes and give us soup or sticky rice with coconut. I really liked singing at those houses!

On Christmas day we would have a sort of festival. Everyone from the surrounding villages would get together, and they would all bring food and donations. We'd cook all the food together. We usually had sticky rice, chicken and rice soup, and sometimes wild pig with curry

or another wild animal.

We'd also play games and sports, and the winners would get a bar of soap as a prize. I think that was my favorite part. We'd play soccer and volleyball, and we'd have foot races and all kinds of different activities. As a boy of seven or eight, I can remember being really happy as I came home with 20 or 30 bars of soap. Some of them were unique, like a game we called "slippery post." We'd put money on the end of a big bamboo pole, and whoever could get the money off the top was the winner. That was a really hard game to win.

We'd have a worship service together with all of the villages, and at night there would be concert with songs, stories, and drama including a nativity play.

We also exchanged gifts. We didn't really have candy, but we made a sort of cookie by pounding sticky rice together and topping it with sesame seeds.

During my first Christmas in Canada, we Karens held a big dinner together, but after a couple of years we stopped doing it. Everyone got too busy. But that first Christmas was kind of amazing for me. We'd never seen Christmas lights in the jungle, and when I saw them around the city I thought it was incredible to see so many different kinds. I was also amazed by how many people came to church compared to a usual Sunday. ■—with notes from Connie Purvis

A Christmas memory from Denmark appears on our website, along with some additional drawings. [www.presbyterianrecord.ca](http://www.presbyterianrecord.ca)



# PRESBYTERIAN RECORD



*"Light Comes to Mankind"*  
by Alan Wybrasz  
Knox North Easthope  
Stratford, Ont.

2008  
Advent Calendar



# Advent / Christmas Calendar

## Abundant Living

by June Stevenson

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

NOVEMBER 2008

30



**1<sup>ST</sup> ADVENT SUNDAY**  
**Isaiah 9:1-2**  
 Light a candle, an electric or battery. Pray for renewal of spirit at this special season.

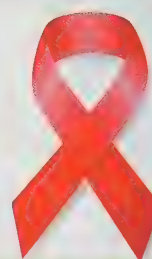
DECEMBER 2008

1



**Matthew 5:14-16**  
 Survey the light bulbs used in your household. Plan to replace them with energy saving bulbs.

**1 John 1:5-7**  
 Bring light into someone's heart. Make a donation to PWS&D to fight AIDS in Africa.



**Ephesians 5:7-9**  
 Pray for children who live in the darkness of war, hunger and poverty.



7

**Matthew 4:16-17**  
 Purchase solar lights for outdoor decoration or use paper bags with candles to light your walk.

**Matthew 10:40-42**

Check taps and toilet for leaks. Reduce showers taken, and laundry and dishwasher use. Turn off taps when shaving and brushing teeth.



8



**Psalm 104:10-13**  
 Finish any outdoor work, protecting plants, raking leaves and/or offer to help a neighbour with outdoor chores.

9

**Isaiah 40:10-11**  
 Pray for refugees, orphans, and displaced persons in Afghanistan, Darfur, Iraq, Syria and other places.

**1Corinthians 2:15-16**

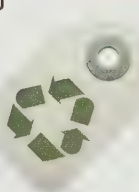
Pray for people living with terrorism, landmines, and the threat of nuclear war. Pray for the discernment of leaders.

14



**Deuteronomy 30:19-20**

Take your own bags or containers when shopping for gifts or other shopping.



15

**Deuteronomy 30:15-16**

Use recycled items to wrap presents: string, newspaper, magazines, fabric, brown paper, reusable boxes and bags. Be creative!



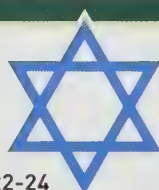
16

**John 15:1-2**  
 Buy gifts that conserve bulbs, seeds, plants, and homemade baking.



**Isaiah 40:29-31**  
 Invite someone who is housebound to your Sunday School pageant, Choir concert, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day service and provide transportation.

21



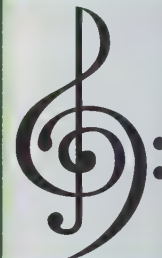
**Luke 2:22-24**  
 Hanukkah begins today. Remember that Jesus and his family were Jewish. Pray for right relations between different faiths.

22



**Isaiah 58:11-12**  
 Use scentless candles and avoid highly perfumed potpourri around the house for those with allergies.

23



**Isaiah 58:6-7**  
 For each new item of clothing received, give away one. Do the same with toys, household items and books.



28



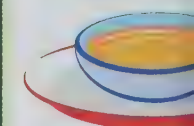
**Psalm 104:16-17**  
 Provide for the wintering birds by putting out suet, seed, and fruit.

29



**Psalm 112:9**  
 Dispose of old batteries and hazardous waste at your local disposal site.

30



**Psalm 41**  
 Clean out the stew pot.



Read and meditate upon each scripture, and thoughtfully carry out the activity or a similar one. Remember, life is about how you use what you have, not about how much you have. May all people live abundantly.

I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly.  
- John 10:10b NRSV

Monday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>3</p> 	<p>4</p>  <p><b>Genesis 1:29-30</b> Save on gasoline by walking when you don't need to drive.</p>	<p>5</p>  <p><b>Matthew 12:34-35</b> Plan shopping trips so that fewer trips requiring vehicles are needed, especially at this busy time.</p>	<p>6</p>  <p><b>Psalms 65:9-10</b> When necessary, purchase filters for taps or for large containers.</p>
<p>10</p> 	<p>11</p>  <p><b>2Corinthians 5:16-20</b> Hold the Native Truth and Reconciliation Commission in your prayers.</p>	<p>12</p>  <p><b>Luke 21:1-4</b> Make your own Christmas cards out of scrap paper, fabric, baubles and so on. Make envelopes or don't use any. Deliver your own cards.</p>	<p>13</p>  <p><b>Matthew 25:14-17</b> Give the gift of your time to a shut-in: to shop, wrap, or write Christmas cards.</p>
<p>17</p>  <p>to grow: atnip ... Give ns or snacks.</p>	<p>18</p>  <p><b>Luke 6:43-45</b> Consider people for whom your gift can be a donation to an organization like PWS&amp;D.</p>	<p>19</p>  <p><b>2Corinthians 2:1-4</b> Each time you buy groceries, purchase items for food banks. Buy Fair Trade products.</p>	<p>20</p>  <p><b>Amos 9:14-15</b> Consider the pros and cons of an artificial tree you can reuse or a real tree that you can replant.</p>
<p>24</p> <p><b>John 11:9:103-105</b> battery-ated candles ssible and n to or sing stmas carols.</p>	<p>25</p>  <p><b>John 8:12</b> Praise God: The Light of the world is born!</p>	<p>26</p>  <p><b>Isaiah 9:6-7</b> Pray for peace and reconciliation among all nations and cultures.</p>	<p>27</p>  <p><b>James 4:11-12</b> Don't throw away Christmas wrap, boxes or packing material. Find ways to reuse or recycle.</p>
<p>31</p> <p><b>17</b> fridge. Make with leftovers.</p>	<p><b>JANUARY 2009</b></p> <p><b>Psalms 122:1-2</b> Happy New Year! Resolve to be more environmentally conscious this year. Continue to practise or put into place some of the suggestions in this calendar.</p> 	<p>2</p>  <p><b>Lamentations 5:1-5</b> Begin collecting items for charity: eyeglasses, aluminum tabs, soup labels, stamps, cell phones ...</p>	<p>3</p>  <p><b>EPIPHANY Ephesians 4:21-24</b> Take time in prayer and meditation today to prepare yourself for a new year in Christ.</p>





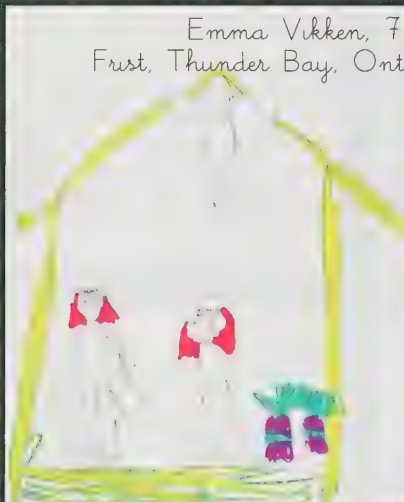
Anon, St Matthew's, Ingleside, Ont.



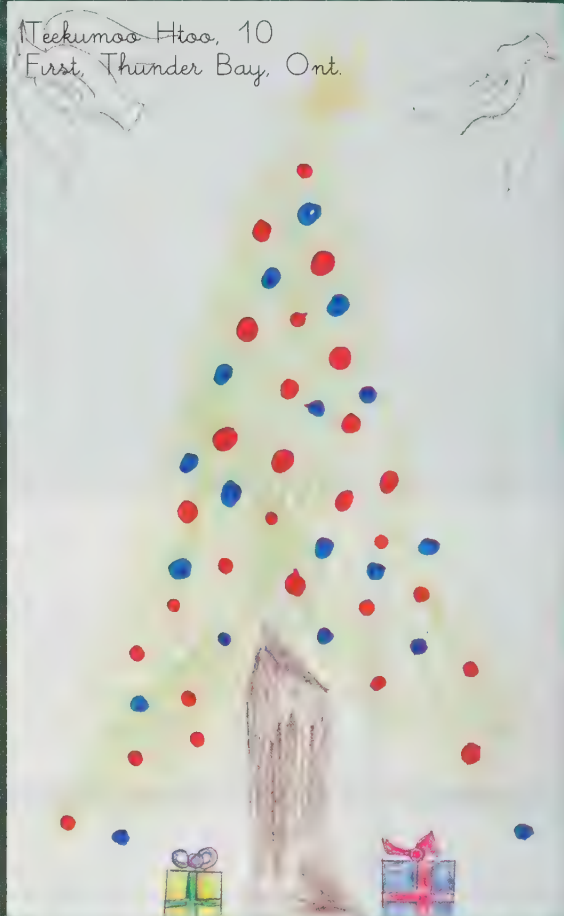
Emily O'Brien, 7  
Trafalgar,  
Oakville, Ont.



Mumusha Htoo, 8  
First, Thunder Bay, Ont.



Emma Vikken, 7  
First, Thunder Bay, Ont.



Neekumao Htoo, 10  
First, Thunder Bay, Ont.



Alexa Thomson-McWilliams, 11



Anon, St. Matthew's, Ingleside, Ont.



Rachel Hamilton, 8  
St. Mark's, Charlottetown



Hope McLean  
Burns Mesa,  
Glencoe, Ont.



# PWS&D Developments

The quarterly newsletter for  
Presbyterian World Service & Development

December 2008 edition

*PWS&D is the development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada*

## Surviving the Cyclone

*Provided with files from ACT International*

**YANGON, MYANMAR (BURMA),** August 21, 2008—Ma Yi was one of the fortunate ones: all that she lost was her house, and everything in it. Many other survivors of Cyclone Nargis, which hammered Myanmar's Irrawaddy delta region in early May, suffered losses that can never be replaced—brothers and sisters, parents and children. While Ma Yi finds it hard to celebrate, she knows it could have been much worse for her and her family.

When the winds started ripping houses apart, Ma Yi and her husband, a farmer, huddled together with their three children to wait out the storm, hoping to avoid the worst. Their home overlooked a small creek that connects the village to one of the countless rivers of the delta, so they were the first to see the rising water.

"The wind increased all through the night, and then when the sun began to rise, the water suddenly came higher. I said to my husband that we had to run. At 8am, just after we left the house, the wind tore it apart. The whole house collapsed. We ran to a friend's house farther from the creek."

### Starting over

Most of the people in Ma Yi's village are farmers. Many other homes were destroyed, and nearly all suffered some form of damage. During the agricultural season the villagers spend much of their time in huts at the edge of their paddy fields. Not a single one of these was left standing after the

storm. Their rice paddies were inundated and swamped with trees. Hundreds of buffalo also perished.

The months since the storm have been a long, slow struggle to rebuild. "We stayed at our friend's for fifteen days, then we returned to put our own home back together." There wasn't much to salvage; many of the roofing sheets had blown off, and much of the furniture was destroyed.

With help from PWS&D through the Action by Churches Together (ACT) alliance, they were able to raise the wooden structure again, and use plastic sheeting and some thatch as a temporary roof covering.

ACT efforts have been in full swing since mid-May, bringing relief and support to those who need it most.

Specific accomplishments include:

- ♦ 1,572 communities received water baskets, serving an average of 150 individuals in each location with drinking water.
- ♦ Over 24,000 tarpaulins are helping more than 100,000 people create temporary shelters.
- ♦ More than 80,000 individuals have received food items.
- ♦ Approximately 120,000 people are receiving assistance to purchase food and other relief items.
- ♦ Power tillers, fuel and rice seeds are



*Rebuilding after Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar (Burma)*

helping villages ensure a rice paddy harvest.

♦ Small-scale assistance is helping people deal with the psychosocial consequences of the disaster.

For the full list of relief activities, visit [www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd).

### Grateful for support

"We want to rebuild our lives and move on," Ma Yi says. When asked about the assistance she has received from the ACT alliance, Ma Yi says, "We are grateful for the help... Without them I don't know how we would have survived."

### You can help

Please pray for the millions of people who were affected by Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar. You can help ensure basic necessities such as food, clean water and shelter are available after disasters strike by making a donation to PWS&D on the website, mailing donations directly to the office, giving through your church or calling 1-800-619-7301, ext. 291.



# Refugee Sponsorship

## Providing Sanctuary and a Place to Call Home



In 2007, Beaches Presbyterian Church in Toronto asked PWS&D for guidance in sponsoring a refugee family with children. Given that 50% of the world's refugees are kids, this request was a welcome one.

When a request came from the Canadian Embassy in Colombia, looking for a group to welcome a single mother with five sons ages 7 to 17, this profile seemed to fit Beaches perfectly. However, there was an audible "gulp" on the phone when it was explained there were five children! This was going to be a major undertaking. But Session quickly and enthusiastically endorsed the initiative, and the refugee committee rallied when they learned of the urgency of the request.

Claudia arrived during the first weeks of Advent 2007, less than six weeks from the date of the request.

Claudia and her sons are from Colombia, one of the most dangerous countries in the world. Since Claudia had her own laundry business in her home, an armed group assumed she

had money and began issuing threats to her and her family. With fears for her safety, Claudia also worried that her sons would be forcibly recruited into the paramilitaries or rebel forces — either one a dangerous proposition. The family fled to Venezuela but death threats continued. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees recognized an urgent need for protection and referred her to Canada.

Over the past year, Beaches Church, with financial and prayerful support from several other congregations and individuals, has assisted Claudia and her family to face many challenges including medical problems, learning English, and the



*One of Claudia's sons, and a very supportive member of Beaches' congregation, is pictured with Lori Gemmell (centre) and Henriette de Kloet at a fundraising concert for the family*

depression refugees experience when they realize all they have lost in their search for safety. Lori Gemmell of the sponsorship committee wrote to PWS&D of the experience: "Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to sponsor Claudia and her children, and the opportunity to rise to the challenge. All of our lives are so enriched from knowing them."

Amen to that!

### An Advent reflection:

Jesus, Mary and Joseph were refugees. Forced to flee King Herod who planned to kill Jesus, an angel told them to go to Egypt in the middle of the night.

Today, around the world, men, women and children are forced to make the same painful decision to leave their homes, which Joseph made 2,000 years ago. They will seek refuge, and some will come to Canada seeking our protection. Each time Christians walk with those who are persecuted, we remember our Saviours' birth.



Have you visited the PWS&D website recently? You can:

- Donate to specific programs
- Request a Gift of Hope card in someone's honour
- Order a free gift catalogue
- Read updates on emergency appeals
- Download resources such as liturgies and the Annual Report
- And *much more!*



Visit

[www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd)



## New Futures for Children

With an eye to the future, families in some of the most impoverished neighbourhoods of Managua – the capital city of Nicaragua, Central America – are implementing programs aimed at ensuring their babies get a healthy and stimulating start to their lives.

Taking the scientific evidence to heart – that the most important period in childhood development is during infancy – mothers have banded together to support each other from the start of their pregnancies until the children are three years old.

The women meet in someone's yard or living room to discuss the importance of nutrition to their babies' health, the benefits of breastfeeding for at least two years, and how simple exercises for their babies stimulate cerebral and physical development.

Leonor Midence is the Director of Social Education for PWS&D program partners, the Soya Association of Nicaragua (Soynica). Soynica supports their women's groups with

nutritionists and specialists in early childhood development. Leonor stresses that caring for children begins well before birth and effective programs in childhood development are necessary to teach mothers how to properly raise their children. Leonor states that nutritional training with the women's groups "is aimed towards the babies being born with a weight of three kilos or seven pounds, measuring about 50 centimetres, and having their development strengthened exclusively by breastfeeding."

PWS&D supports Soynica and the women's groups of Managua, but your help is needed to make sure these babies get the proper head start on their development.

To contribute to the success of this program, you can donate online or for more information, contact Alex Macdonald, Americas program coordinator, at [amacdonald@presbyterian.ca](mailto:amacdonald@presbyterian.ca).

### Give a gift that can change lives!

"A gift opens doors..."

Proverbs 18:16a

You can support Presbyterian World Service & Development through the new Gifts of Change catalogue.

Order your free Gifts of Change catalogue today!

1-800-619-7301.

### Gifts of Change



[www.presbyterian.ca/giftsofchange](http://www.presbyterian.ca/giftsofchange)





# Presbyterians in Action!



Rev. Dr. Roberta Clare and Dr. James Zacharias were married on May 4, 2008, at **Vancouver Taiwanese Church** by Rev. Dr. Chinchai (Peter) Wang.

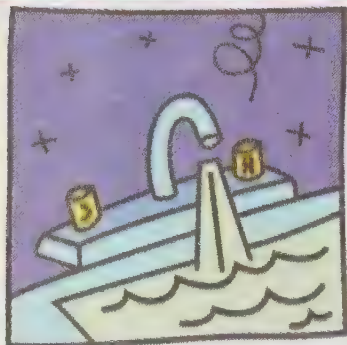
Instead of receiving traditional wedding gifts, Roberta and James asked guests to make a donation to PWS&D. This special day was made even more meaningful, with over \$2,000 going to support people in need through relief and development projects around the world!

Congratulations Roberta and James!

## Camp Geddie in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, held a Mission

Offering this summer using the PWS&D "Care for Creation" coin bank labels. The children enthusiastically took on the fundraising challenge while learning more about PWS&D.

Together they raised nearly \$400 for PWS&D projects to end poverty around the world!



Laura Burns from **Clarkson Road Presbyterian Church in Mississauga, Ontario**, had a little idea that yielded big results. She organized a

special fundraising campaign to raise money for PWS&D water projects. When Laura considered how important water is to our lives and how fortunate we are to have clean water available at all times, she decided to challenge members of her congregation to put a small amount of money into a jar every time they took a drink of water. The jars were soon overflowing: an incredible \$4,130 was raised to help bring clean water to those who need it most!

## Members of **St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Sherbrooke, Quebec**, held a

special "Clergy crossing and fun walk/run" event on August 16 to raise money for PWS&D. The event included brunch and Rev. John Barry Forsyth swam across Lake Massawippi. The event was a lot of fun, a big success, and raised over \$1,600 for PWS&D to create futures of hope for those in need.



## The **Vacation Bible School at Chinese Presbyterian Church in Vancouver, British Columbia**, helped children learn more about Jesus and mission work through a variety of activities, including singing, crafts and talks. Topics included PWS&D and reconstruction efforts in

Sichuan, China, following the earthquake that struck in May. A freewill offering was collected at the end of the program and resulted in a donation to PWS&D of \$1,000 for relief efforts in China.

Tell us about your congregation's fundraising efforts! Call 1-800-619-7301 ext. 243.

For more information or to make a donation, contact:



**Presbyterian World Service & Development**

The development and relief agency of  
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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416-441-1111 • 1-800-619-7301

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www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd

**Canada**

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Editor: Barb Summers, Communications Coordinator

Enclosed is my donation to PWS&D for: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I would like to receive PWSDevelopments regularly (free)

Please make cheques payable to PWS&D or  
make an online donation at [www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd](http://www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd)

PWS&D gratefully acknowledges all individuals and  
congregations who support the development and relief work  
of The Presbyterian Church in Canada



# Spiritual Grandparents

We are children of God.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

*Christmas and December 28:  
Galatians 4:4-7 / Luke 2:22-40*

Paul writes of God's Son, "born of a woman, born under the law." In the first three verses of our Gospel, Luke mentions the law three times. He sounds more like Matthew here! Luke's likely Gentile audience isn't concerned about the Law of Moses, but Luke still wants to show where the Saviour of the world came from. Luke echoes Paul, driving home the truth that Jesus came into the world and began his life as a good Jewish son of faithful, if humble, Jewish parents.

We know nothing of Jesus' Galilean or Judean grandparents. Joseph's father has two different names in the gospel genealogies. Tradition assigns names and stories to Mary's parents. But Gabriel speaks to Mary by her own name, in her own right when he visits her in Nazareth. We only know that Joseph is a descendant of David, and some of his family live in Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem on their own. They go up to Jerusalem as a family of three. At the temple they meet two wonderful spiritual grandparents.

Simeon and Anna are often overlooked. Their story comes up on one of those Sundays when many of us take a holiday from church. Christmas is exhausting! We need a break!



RYAN EVANS, 8, LONDON, ONT.

Mary and Joseph are tired, too, as they trudge toward the temple. Ignored by congregations then and now, Simeon and Anna shuffle on and off the stage. Shouldn't the last act of our Christmas pageant be their shining moment? (For that matter, shouldn't John the Baptist have Act One, all to himself?) Simeon and Anna remind us, no matter how often we say it's so, Christmas isn't for the children.

Spiritual grandparents. They welcome Jesus into the family. They bind him with a cord of love that connects him to all the generations of his nation. With wisdom and insight they look ahead as only grandparents can,

with both anticipation and warning. Both to be heeded!

Simeon is "righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rests on him." He keeps the Law of Moses. He answers its call to prayer and sacrifice. He holds the hope of the prophets. We don't know if he's a prophet himself, or a priest, but the Spirit is upon him. He's the ideal elder of Israel, and he speaks and acts as both prophet and priest. Can we imagine Simeon acting out our first reading? Let's put Isaiah 62:1,2,3 in his heart, if not on his lips.

Anna is triply honoured. She has lived beyond the psalm's four ►



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score years! She has lived at least 60 of those years in the temple! She is recognized as a prophet! In Luke's telling, the shepherds are the first evangelists, in and around Bethlehem (2:20). Anna becomes the first evangelist to the temple and the city.

**{ Paul rings true: The time is right for Jesus. The time is right for the world.**

Mary and Joseph are "amazed at what was being said about Jesus." Despite all they've heard about their son so far, could this be the first time they see the path they have to travel with him? Amazed? Scared! They need a blessing. They need assurance. They need vision. Who better to provide those necessities than Simeon and Anna? Grandparents indeed.

"The fullness of time ..." When the time was right. Paul's words ring poignantly through this story. The time is right for Jesus. The time is right for the world. But it's the right time for Anna and Simeon to leave the stage. Simeon says it so well. "Let me go, Lord. You've given me everything I could ever have hoped for. And more." Anna preaches the good news. That's the joyful end of her story. We hear no more of her.

As I write this I've just returned from a congregational retreat at our beautiful Synod camp. Over the weekend we thought about family trees, and the genealogies that are ours by birth and in the Spirit. The grandmothers among us helped us live what we were learning about. Our spiritual grandparents help us understand what Paul means when he says we're children, heirs and heiresses, of God. ■

*Rev. Laurence DeWolfe lives and teaches in Halifax.*





NICOLE FOUCAULT, GALINEAU, QUE.

# Mrs. Muddle's Example

Remembering a remarkable woman.  
Part Two. BY PHIL CALLAWAY

Dear friend,  
I hope you enjoy this gift box. It comes with my love to you. I am sick and very weak now, so do not write well. I have three granddaughters and seven grandsons and I love them all. My prayer is that they will all come to know Jesus as their Saviour. I believe they have accepted Him, but not all are living for Him. I pray you will accept Him too. I am your new Grandma—I'm 85 years old.

With my love, Honour Muddle

All kinds of people have impacted me through the years. Some are preachers. Some are writers. Others are relatives. And one was a faithful wife and mother with a simple philosophy: When you see a need, meet it.

Ten years ago, when I was staring down the barrel of a job I felt vastly under-qualified for—as editor of *Servant* magazine—one of the first things I did was ask about 20 retired people to pray for me. Mrs. Muddle was one who said yes. When I met her from time to time in the grocery store or on the street she would remind me that she was praying for ➤



MARK, ST. ANDREW'S, RICHMOND, ONT.



me. And a few times she said, "I pray for you every day."

A few weeks after her beloved husband passed away, she reminded me, "I pray for you every day."

When her health was failing and she knew her time was short, Mrs. Muddle was praying for me.

One night she called our pastor. Pastor John had been sick for a few days. In fact, a flu bug had laid him out so flat that he could barely enjoy Monday Night Football. "How are you doing?" Mrs. Muddle asked him.

"I'm okay," he responded, recounting a few of his aches and pains, but trying not to give her an organ recital.

"I just wanted to see how you were feeling so I would know how to pray," she said. They talked for 15 minutes before John found out that she was calling him from a hospital bed.

I can't read Philippians 2:3,4 without thinking of Mrs. Muddle's example: "Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. Don't think only about your own interests, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing."

I asked Mrs. Muddle once what helped her during tough times. "Oh," she said simply, "life is too short to live it for yourself."

That's the way she lived.

That's the way she died.

Helping people like me run the race.

I'll never look at a jar of sweet pickles without thinking of that one word: Others. ■

*Phil Callaway is the author of Who Put My Life on Fast Forward? (Harvest House). Visit him at [www.philcallaway.com](http://www.philcallaway.com)*

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# Studying The Way

A series on religion and theology will begin in January.

Think of it as a Christmas present from the *Presbyterian Record* to you—an opportunity to spend 2009 with two eminent Presbyterians, one a philosopher, the other a theologian, discussing some interesting questions like Who is God?

Rev. Dr. Joseph McLelland is professor emeritus of McGill University, Montreal, and Presbyterian College, author of many books, an esteemed teacher and a past moderator of the church. On alternate months, starting in January, he will present a series of articles on How To Study Religion, touching upon the essential questions about faith, and with primers on major

world religions.

Rev. Dr. John Vissers is principal of Presbyterian College, formerly senior minister at Knox Spadina, Toronto and author of *The Neo-Orthodox Theology of W.W. Bryden*. On alternate months, starting in February, he will present a series of articles on the basic tenets of our reformed Christian faith. (He will also be participating in the ongoing Calvin series that began this summer in the *Record*.)

This series on religion and theology grows out of seminars both have done for the laity. Additional resources will be available online to encourage private or group study within your congregation.

## How to Study Religion

BY JOSEPH MCLELLAND

The idea of “studying religion” has come of age—we’re now being asked to include it as a regular school subject. On campus, students may skip church (organized religion) but they fill university courses on religion. Religious Studies is a subject here to stay.

Religion suffers from both friends and enemies. The friends object you can’t “study” religion at all; it’s a private matter of faith. This prevents discussion and debate, even between religions, not to mention the constraints on witnessing. On the other hand, its critics claim that religion is so loaded you ►



can't be objective or rational about it. Both sides have a point—we answer by distinguishing “faith” and “tradition”—the first has a certain privacy that must be acknowledged, while the second is in the public domain. History and society are so tied up with religion that it is escapism to hide behind the difficulties facing this subject. To study world religions, to learn about the great traditions that shape millions of lives, to recognize the role of religion in history—this is surely a pressing concern for all, and a necessary study whether in church or school.

Where to begin? To think something through is a sort of mental game that must follow the rules of logic or common sense. First: is the very word “religion” a good one to describe what we're after? It comes from the Latin meaning, “to bind back,” and so isn't helpful when we think of the richness of faith or spirituality. In fact the names given to world religions don't help either: “Christians” were called that by their enemies (Acts 11:26); they were rather “those who followed Christ's way.” Similarly, “Hinduism” and “Buddhism” are names given by Western academics. The best term for any religion is in fact The Way, since this is what they all claim to be: a path or journey. We learn from those

Masters of the Way, who sought to understand their faith, who even laid down their lives as witnesses. They are the best authorities for the decisive role religion has played in the human drama. And they come in strange and surprising shapes, as we will see.

## Theology is Faith Asking Questions

BY JOHN VISSERS

The most interesting definition of theology I've ever heard was delivered by a Quaker writer, Elton Trueblood, at a lecture in a Toronto church more than 30 years ago. “Theology,” he said, “is your dogmatism chasing my catechism.”

This is, sadly, too often true. And it's why we often try to avoid theology, even in the church. Theology conjures up visions of angry and anxious people arguing about arcane points of doctrine. “Doctrine divides,” we're told, “while love unites.” Better to focus on love for sure.

In its most basic sense, however, theology simply means thinking (*logos*) about God (*theos*). But within that simple statement lie at least a thousand questions. Whose God? What or where is God? Can we know God?

What has God been up to? Can God really be studied? The Holy One, after all, can't be Googled and downloaded to an iPod.

If, and when, you ask such questions, you are doing theology. Theology is not about the business of setting forth eternal truths once for all time. It is, in the words of one theologian, faith seeking understanding, faith venturing forth to inquire, faith daring to ask questions.

In short, theology invites us to examine what we believe. If, as the philosophers say, an unexamined life is not worth living, then an unexamined faith may not be worth believing. Theology, therefore, does not shrink from asking hard questions about the Bible, the Christian tradition, and the way life is today.

That being said, we note that Christians do theology from a particular faith perspective. We begin, unapologetically, with the assumption that God is before we are, and that God has been revealed decisively in the crucified and risen Messiah named Jesus.

From there, we try to sort out what may be appropriate and adequate for Jesus followers among the many options available for belief today. For example, what should we think about the new atheism, religious pluralism, or the emergent church?

But let's be clear: this kind of theology, rightly understood, is not just faith seeking understanding, as if clear-headed thinking is enough. It is faith seeking wisdom, faith longing for transformation, faith willing to make decisions, faith eager to engage the world, faith willing to take risks. We need a theology that helps faith sing and dance on life's journey.

I am delighted to write this series with my colleague and friend Professor McLelland. While we may talk about different themes, and take different approaches, we share a common concern for the faith of the church in our time. And it's worth remembering that for theology to do its job well, theologians of the church have to be free from the church in order to be free for the church. ■

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MARK, 10



DEE RAMSAY, 7, CARBERRY, MAN.



EMILY O'BRIEN, 7, TRAFALGAR, OAKVILLE, ONT

# Jesus is Here!

Jesus is Coming! BY CALVIN BROWN

Advent is a strange season in some ways because its focus is both looking backwards and looking forwards as we stand in the present. It is a time when we look back to remember that God's people looked with anticipation to the coming of the Messiah (the actual birth of the saviour which we celebrate at Christmas time). But Advent is also the time of year we are to begin life anew with the deep awareness that Jesus Christ will come again in a surprising future to judge the living and the dead as the Apostle's Creed reminds us.

Growing up in an evangelical Presbyterian church we did not often put a lot of emphasis on the church calendar. We seldom spoke of Advent as a season and the four Sundays before Christmas were only prelude to Christmas. (Yes, every Sunday in December we sang

good old Christmas carols! There was no holding back until Christmas day!) All through Advent we revelled in the glory of the incarnation oblivious to the scorn of the liturgically correct! The whole focus of the season was celebrating the birth of Jesus and there were few doubts about who he was and why he was coming! But as I recall there was little focus at that time of year on the second coming of Christ.

Today, even in many congregations that do follow the church year more vigorously, the emphasis seems to be on the first coming (the birth of the babe) rather than the second. Yet I think the second Advent (to judge the quick and the dead) is an even more

relevant focus. It isn't more important than the message of the incarnation (God coming to us in human form) but it is more relevant in the sense that it is something that not only affects us now but something we still have time

The whole focus of the season was to celebrate the birth of Jesus and there were few doubts about who he was and why he was coming!

to make choices about to help determine our future outcome.

Let me encourage you then to reflect on how ready you will be when Jesus returns. Here is a question we can ask ourselves as Jesus gives it in a parable about the judgement on behalf of the weak: "I tell you that He will bring ➤





EVAN CHILDERHOSE  
ST. MATTHEW'S, INGLESIDE, ONT.

about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8)

The question to ask each day in this advent season is this: When Jesus comes will he find faith in me? What faith will he see being lived in my family, my church and my nation? And what can I do to fan the flame of faith? If you meditate each day on these questions, it will drive you to prayer and action and will give you a profound sense of the urgency and meaning of the season that will renew your faith and life.

The son of God is coming! Jesus says: "He that believes on him is not judged; he that doesn't believe has been judged already, because he has not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18) ■

*Rev. Calvin Brown is the executive director of the Renewal Fellowship within the Presbyterian Church.*



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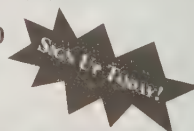
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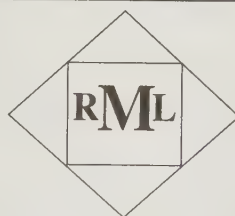
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# An Imitation of Christ

John Calvin saw evidence of God's goodness in all things. BY IAN S. WISHART

One of the keys to John Calvin's enduring influence is his practical advice on Christian living. He understood ordinary people in the midst of ordinary life. "If we live, we must use the necessary instruments for life. We cannot avoid those matters which serve our pleasures rather than our needs. But that we should use them with a pure conscience, we should observe moderation." Calvin did not advocate withdrawal from the world. He built no monasteries—no wandering the highways with a begging bowl. He was a city man, and projected a way of life for urban men and women. As a devotional writer, he can speak to a modern world.

Among young people, a recent guide to conduct was to ask the question, "What would Jesus do?" That was not Calvin's question, but his thoughts were on similar lines: "The Lord has adopted us to be His children on condition that we show forth an imitation of Christ." This means our way of life should reflect our faith. Mere talk is of little consequence, but character is vitally important. True religion is reflected in our thought, our conduct and even in our wishes. We are dependent on God, so pride in ourselves, arrogance and self-glorification should have little place in our lives.

Calvin wrote a little book which is published in English as *The Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life*. Its

contents became chapters in his famous *Institutes*, but it is much easier to read in the smaller volume. Christian life is hopeful because it is based on the promises of God. The final hope is for life beyond this life, and this enables us to look past the troubles of the passing days. On the whole, Calvin had a gloomy view of human life; he was a refugee, having been driven out of France, and for a time also from Geneva, and he helped the citizens of Geneva make the city a place of refuge for other refugees. Nevertheless this is God's world, and everything in it gives evidence of God's goodness. We should praise God for his blessings, and take pleasure in the beauties of nature and of art.

Unlike many other devotional writers, Calvin was a married man. He knew some of the difficulties of family life. Who is not aware of shortcomings in a husband or a wife? And willful children were as much part of his age as of ours: "Nothing in this world can be expected but strife." Yet we can learn to live beyond these and other troubles. "Since this life serves to teach us the divine kindness, how dare we scorn it as if there was no good in it?"

The imitation of Christ requires self-denial and the bearing of suffering. Both of these were borne by Jesus, and

we should not expect to avoid them. At times it is difficult to place our neighbours' interests above our own, but we must do so with a willing heart and a ready hand. At times we must give up our rights for the sake of others. The gifts we are given are ours so that we may share them with others. Calvin has been portrayed as the originator (or the eager advocate) of unbridled capitalism. This is a grotesque caricature. His emphasis on self-denial is a direct contradiction of greed. "Let us remember that the distribution of

We should praise God for his blessings, and take pleasure in the beauties of nature and of art

profits must be determined by the law of love." What does link Calvin to good business practice is that he believed in accountability. We are accountable to God for the life we live.

Suffering is more difficult than self-denial. For Jesus, it meant bearing the cross. If we are imitators of Christ we will have our lesser crosses to bear. It may be a real comfort to us to sense that in our miseries we have a share in the sufferings of the Master. The fact is that no one can escape from the sorrows and pains of this world. Calvin says that we should bear them





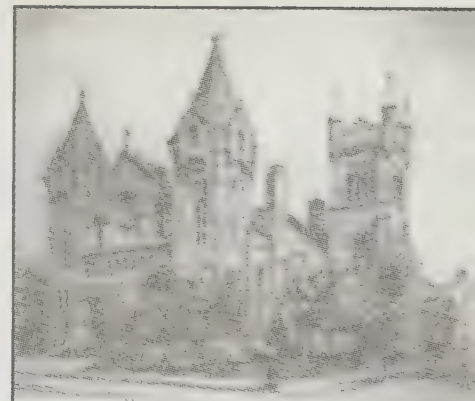
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with a cheerful and joyful heart, for we should know that "God will temper the bitterness of the cross with the joy of the spirit." Sometimes our suffering results from some action in a good cause. Upholding any good cause is for Calvin a worthy Christian service, and should bring its own consolation.

According to Calvin, the true Christian life is an imitation of Christ, in humble obedience, in self-denial, in bearing suffering, in hoping for a better world, and in the right use of this present life. God has provided us with wonderful gifts, and nothing can be wrong with the use of them if they are used for the purposes which God created them. God has provided plants and trees and fruits; these are for our use, and our enjoyment. Among the divine blessings is the gift of wine "which makes glad the heart of man." Such things are given to us that we may praise the goodness of God.

There were two texts from the Bible which were central to Calvin's advice. One is from the Old Testament, Leviticus 19:2: "You shall be holy, for I the Lord am holy." Calvin noted that holiness is not a merit we can attain, but a gift from Christ that enables us to follow him. The other text is from Paul's letter to the Romans: "I appeal to you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Calvin would have us aim for perfection, but as this is unattainable we should seek for spiritual progress according to our abilities. Such ideas are as appropriate today as they were in Calvin's Geneva. ■

*Rev. Ian S. Wishart lives in New Foundland.*



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Psalms 116:15*

In this season of celebrating a birth let us remember our friends who made our lives better, richer and happier; those who made us smile; those who took us by the hand, gently massaging our reluctance, and brought us closer to the word and to salvation.

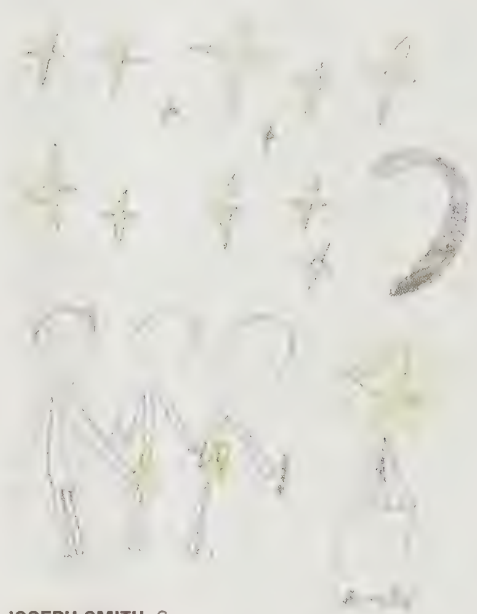
This is an incomplete list, of course, and for that we apologize.

## REV. DR. J. J. HARROLD MORRIS. 1929-2008

We in the church like to think we own our ministers, especially the good ones, and you will hear many people today say proudly Harrold was my minister.

Harrold's advice was always welcome and wise and I count it a great honour to have been his minister this past year. His most frequent instruction to me however, would come when he found me working in the office on Saturdays or when we would be serving dinner together with Jeanette on Sunday evenings for the Out of the Cold program. He would say to me: "Go home. You are needed there more than you are needed here right now. Don't do what I did."

Harrold held degrees from all three of our denominational colleges and ministered with distinction congregations in Western and Central Canada. He was elected moderator of the



JOSEPH SMITH, 6,  
TRAFALGAR, OAKVILLE, ONT.

115th General Assembly. Our current moderator Rev. Cheol Soon Park was Harrold's student here at Glenview, Toronto.

Through the grace of God, our beginning and our end, we give thanks to God for the gift of Harrold. We are all different because he lived. May he now rest from his labours and rise through the power of the resurrection into that great company of the saints in light.—*Rev. Derek MacLeod, Glenview, Toronto, June 20, 2008*

## REV. DR. MARIANO DIGANGI. 1923-2008

Mario was Italian, Sicilian, the son of immigrants. From his artwork you could tell his love for his native soil. The warm colours, the reds, the ochres,

the bright greens.

What was there about this man that God used him so mightily? There was an essential humility, a self-effacing, even self-deprecating, inability to take himself seriously. Given other pulpit personalities and his gifts of oratory and his adoring congregants, that was no small gift. I think that one thing that saved him was his marvelous sense of humour, his puns. When I turned 60, always a sombre moment, he lightened the occasion by giving me a book of humour inscribed "to a senior (as well as señor)." He was a delight to work for—as my wife, who served at InterServe along with many others, will vouch for. He was organized, thorough, fair, compassionate and even-tempered.

When all is said, however, the answer to my question as to why God used him would be found in a single word: Grace. I conclude with a quotation from a sermon he preached on Isaiah 6 over 40 years ago: "The livelier our sense of guilt and grace and gratitude, the more faithful and fervent will be our obedience to our Lord and Saviour. When we are grateful for the grace that is greater than all our guilt, our souls are stirred to deeper reverence and higher loyalty."—*Rev. Dr. A. Donald MacLeod, Knox, Toronto, April 22, 2008*

CONTINUED ON OUR WEBSITE  
[WWW.PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA](http://WWW.PRESBYTERIANRECORD.CA)



# Real Gifts for Real People!

Give a gift that can save lives.

BY REV. CHEOL SOON PARK

Every December, I am very busy for a special reason. The first day of month we sing Happy Birthday to my wife Karen. While the familiar song still lingers in my ears, our wedding anniversary comes up three days later. So it becomes "a very Happy Anniversary." Then after three weeks, Merry Christmas arrives. I guess I didn't know better about the implication of these special days before I got married. I feel sorry for my children as I see them preparing cards and gifts one after another, and their wallets getting thinner. (Fortunately, none of them were born in December.)

I admire those who complete their Christmas shopping far in advance so they don't have to worry about gifts in December. Yet it is not the act of purchase alone that keeps you on your toes. Choosing an item is an even bigger headache. It is not an easy task to impress a person who seems to have everything already. So some merchants come out with new and eye catching items. How about a 14-k gold nail clipper? A hairbrush decorated with dazzling gemstones and real pearls for anyone? Wait, there is a good item for gentlemen, too. What about a case for an automatic hand watch? This box is equipped with automatic rotating mechanism so that your watch won't go to sleep even though you don't wear it for a long period of time. Of course, the case costs more than many of your

watches combined.

Christmas is a time to give. So we prepare gifts for those we know but what goes around usually comes around. All the gifts stay within the circle—circle of friends and family members. For us, Christmas is rather a time to take and that's why everyone is busy even in the midst of a troubled economy.

For many people in this world, Christmas is another day of survival. They have nothing to celebrate but much to suffer; especially when they have a disease like Tuberculosis. TB, an ancient killer, once ravaged cultures stretching from Greece to Egypt. And it has returned in such an alarming rate that UN medical staff are greatly concerned. In 2005 the disease was diagnosed in 9.2 million more people, almost exclusively in developing countries in Asia and Africa. In the same year 1.7 million people died from the disease. TB is a preventable and curable disease yet poor infrastructure and lack of proper anti-TB medicine makes the situation worse. Each patient needs six months to stay on medicine to eradicate TB but not too many people can afford the expense.

In Swaziland, according to a UN survey, 1.3 per cent of the population is estimated to be infected by TB, the highest among those countries. According to Dr. Yoon Goo Lee who served as the CEO of Red Cross, and



also the CEO of World Vision Korea, North Korea (which was not included in the survey due to its security) is estimated to have about a million cases, an alarming five per cent of the population; and 30 per cent of those patients are young children. It is becoming a global epidemic.

In the middle of grave statistics, there is good news, too. You can help. The supply of anti-TB drugs and nutrient-like vitamins for six months may be provided for \$30 per patient. Presbyterian World Service and Development will be more than happy to assist you in delivering this life saving gift to those who are desperately in need. This gift you give won't come around but it will save a life. And it is what a gift is supposed to be. Jesus Christ gave himself to us so that we may be saved.

Stop making yourselves busy looking for a gift. Let us join together this Christmas to send real gifts to real people.

A Merry Christmas!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Cheol Soon Park".

Rev. Cheol Soon Park



# 성탄 선물을 준비하셨나요?



매년 12월이 되면 저는 매우 바빠집니다. 12월 초하루에 “생일 축하합니다”로 제 아내의 생일을 지내고 나기가 무섭게 아직도 생일 축하 노래가 컷전에 생생한데 3일 후에는 결혼 기념일이 다가 오기 때문입니다. 그래서 “결혼 기념 축하합니다”를 부르고 나면 3주 후에 “즐거운 성탄을 축하합니다”를 불러야 하니 얼마나 바쁘겠습니까? 제가 결혼 전에는 이런 특별한 날의 의미를 잘 몰랐던 것 같습니다. 이기간 제 아이들이 계속 카드에 선물 준비하느라고 지갑이 점점 얇아지는 것을 보면 미안한 마음이 들기도 합니다. (그래도 아이들 셋중에 12월에 출생한 아이는 없으니 다행입니다.)

저는 성탄 선물 준비를 미리 다 해놓고 바쁘지 않은 연말과 성탄을 지내는 분들을 보면 존경스럽습니다. 우리를 총총걸음 하게 만드는 것은 물건을 구입하는 일뿐이 아닙니다. 어떤 물건을 고르냐 하는 문제는 더 큰 고민거리입니다. 이미 모든 것을 다 가지고 있는 사람에게 무슨 선물을 해서 그분을 감동시킬 수 있겠냐는 것입니다. 그래서 선물 회사들이 눈길을 끄는 새 상품을 내놓고 선전하는 것을 보게 됩니다. “14금으로 만든 손톱깎이는 어떨까요?” “반짝이

는 보석과 진주로 장식한 머리 빗을 필요로 하는 분이 없습니까?” 물론 남자들을 위한 선물도 있습니다. 자동 손목시계를 보관하는 상자는 어떨겠습니까? 이 상자는 자동태엽 시계를 오랫동안 넣어 두어도 상자 안에 자동으로 흔들어주는 기계 장치가 되어있어서 시계가 죽지 않게 해 줍니다. 물론 이 상자는 아마 여러분이 가지고 있는 시계 몇 개보다 훨씬 비쌀 수도 있다는 것만 기억하시기 바랍니다.

성탄절은 선물을 주는 계절입니다. 그래서 우리들은 아는 분들을 위해서 부지런히 선물을 준비합니다. 그렇지만 대개 우리가 주는 선물은 또 다른 선물이 되어서 돌아오는 게 대부분입니다. 그렇게 보면 우리의 선물은 친구나 가족이라는 테두리에서 돌고 도는 선물입니다. 우리들에게 성탄절은 선물을 주는 것과 동시에 선물을 받는 계절입니다. 그래서 이 불행이라는 계절에도 우리가 그렇게 바쁜 것입니다.

이세상의 많은 사람들에게 성탄절은 생존을 위한 또 하루의 시간이라는 것 외에 다른 의미가 없습니다. 축하할 것은 아무것도 없고 고통만 풍성하기 때문입니다. 특별히 그들에게 폐결핵(TB, Tuberculosis)과 같은 무서운 질병이 있을 때 더욱 그렇습니다. 폐결핵은 수 천 년 전에 고대문명의 발생지인 그리스부터 이집트에 이르는 방대한 지역을 황폐화 시킨 적이 있는 질병입니다. 그런데 그 질병이 최근 무서운 속도로 퍼지고 있어서 UN의 관계자들이 심각하게 걱정을 하고 있습니다. 최근 통계에 의하면 2005년에 920만의 새로운 폐결핵 환자가 발생했는데 거의 아시아와 아프리카에 있는 개발도상국 국민들이었습니다. 같은 해에 170만 명이 이 질병으로 목숨을 잃었습니다. 결핵은 예방이 가능하고 완치할 수 있는 병입니다마는 개발도상국들의 열악한 사회 구조와 적절한 약을 구하기 힘든 형편이 상황을 악화시

키고 있습니다. 환자들은 6개월간 철저하게 약을 복용해야 하는데 이 기간에 약을 계속 구입해서 복용할 수 있는 사람이 많지 않다는데 문제가 있습니다.

UN 통계에 의하면 아프리카의 스와질랜드는 국민의 1.3%가 결핵환자로 확인되고 있는데 이것은 통계 대상이 된 여러 나라 중에 가장 높은 비율입니다. 한국 적십자와 월드비전 총재를 역임한 이윤구 박사에 의하면 협조가 되지 않은 북한의 경우 놀랍게도 전국민의 5%인 약 100만의 결핵환자가 있는 것으로 추정되고 있고 그 중에 무려 30%가 어린 아이들이라는 것입니다. 이제 결핵은 세계적 질병으로 퍼져가고 있는 추세입니다.

침울한 통계자료 가운데도 좋은 소식이 있습니다. 여러분이 도울 수 있다는 것입니다. 6개월 동안 환자에게 공급하게 되는 결핵 치료제와 종합 비타민 같은 영양제를 30분에 마련할 수 있습니다. 캐나다 장로교회의 세계봉사 개발국(PWS&D)에서 여러분이 보내시는 생명을 살리는 이 귀한 선물을 도움을 절실하게 필요로 하는 분들에게 전달하는 일을 기꺼이 도와드릴 것입니다. 여러분들이 보내시는 선물은 여러분에게 되돌아올 선물은 아닙니다. 그러나 그것은 목숨을 구하게 될 것입니다. 선물은 바로 이런 것입니다. 주 예수 그리스도께서 자신을 우리에게 아낌없이 주심으로 우리가 구원을 받게 되었습니다.

이제 선물 찾기 위해서 바빴던 발걸음을 멈추시기 바랍니다. 이번 성탄절에는 진짜 사람에게 진짜 선물을 보내는 일에 동참해 주십시오.

기쁜 성탄을 맞으시기 바랍니다.

(동참을 원하시는 분들은 수표를 PWS&D로 발행하시고 노트란에 “Zero TB”라고 적어주십시오.)



## Ministry Opportunities and Interim Moderators

### SYNOD OF THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES

Pictou, N.S., St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Jeanette Fleischer, PO Box 142, River John, NS B0K 1N0; 902-351-2219 (s) or 902-351-2473 (h); jen.fleisch@ns.sympatico.ca.

### SYNOD OF QUEBEC AND EASTERN ONTARIO

Beaconsfield, Que., Briarwood; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. John Vissers, Presbyterian College, 3495 University, Montreal, QC H3A 2A8; 514-288-5256 extension 201; jvissers@presbyteriancollege.ca.

Gloucester (Ottawa), Ont., Gloucester Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Adrian Auret, PO Box 609, Manotick, ON K4M 1A6; 613-692-4228; adrian.auret@rogers.com

### SYNOD OF CENTRAL, NORTHEASTERN ONTARIO AND BERMUDA

Barrie, Ont.; Essa Road; Interim Moderator Rev. Heather Malnick, c/o Living Faith Community Presbyterian Church, 206 Murphy Rd., Baxter, ON L0M 1B1; 705-424-0779; livingfaith@zing-net.ca.

Cambridge, Ont.; St. Andrew's Galt; Minister of Word and Sacrament, Full-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Bill Bynum, c/o St. Andrew's Galt Presbyterian Church, 130 Victoria Ave., Cambridge, ON N1S 1Y2; knoxpreston@golden.net.

Coldwater, Ont.; St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Karen Horst, 200 Maple St., Collingwood, ON L9Y 2R2; karenh@georgian.net.

Englehart, St. Paul's; Tomstown, Ont., Tomstown; St. Paul's and Tomstown Pastoral Charge, approximately 10 km. from Tomstown; Full-time minister; Search Committee Chair Randy Ford, PO Box 737, Englehart, ON P0J 1H0; treeline@ntl.sympatico.ca.

Markham, Ont., St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Don Muir, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON M3C 1J7; 416-441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301 ext. 223; dmuir@presbyterian.ca; www.standrews-markham.ca/search.htm.

New Liskeard, Ont., St. Andrew's; Full-time minister, single-point charge; Search Committee, PO Box 908, New Liskeard, ON P0J 1P0; 705-647-8401; standrewsni@parolink.net.

Nobleton, Ont., St. Paul's; Interim Moderator Rev. Chris Carter, 13190 Keele St., King City, ON L7B 1J2; 905-833-2325; cmcarter@rogers.com.

Peterborough, Ont., St. Giles and South Monaghan and Centreville; Full-time minister for two-point charge; Interim Moderator Rev. Paul D. Johnston, 22 Hillview Dr., Bobcaygeon, ON K0M 1A0; 705-738-6424; knoxpres.paul@bellnet.ca.

Peterborough, Ont., St. Stephen's; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Stuart Macdonald, c/o Knox College, 59 St. George St., Toronto, ON M6S 2E6; s.macdonald@utoronto.ca.

Scarborough, Ont., Clairlea Park; Half-time minister; Interim Moderators Robert and Priscilla Anderson, 174 Springdale Blvd., Toronto, ON M4C 1Z7; 416-469-5986; kimchiman21@hotmail.com.

Scarborough, Ont., Westminster; Interim Moderator Rev. Ann Blane, 1300 Danforth Rd., Scarborough, ON M1J 1E8; 416-267-7897.

Schomberg, Ont., Emmanuel; looking for a half-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Jeremy Lowther; 905-857-2419; jlowther1845@rogers.com.

### SYNOD OF SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

Binbrook, Knox and Carluke, St. Paul's; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Garfield G. Havemann, c/o Chedoke Presbyterian Church, 865 Mohawk Rd. W., Hamilton, ON L9C 7B9; ghavemann@chedokechurch.ca.

Brantford, Knox and Mt. Pleasant, Mt. Pleasant; Interim Moderator Rev. Donald Young, 11 White Oaks Ave., Brantford, ON N3R 5N8; greenbrier@bfree.on.ca.

Fort Erie, St. Andrew's-Knox; Search Committee Chair David Randall, 495 Niagara Blvd., Fort Erie, ON L2A 3H2; 1-888-665-6681; drandall@cogeco.ca.

Hamilton, MacNab St.; Rev. Stephen Jenvey, c/o West Flamborough, 262 Middletown Rd., Dundas, ON L9H 5E2; 905-628-6675; minister\_wfpc@bellnet.ca.

London, St. Lawrence; Half-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Lynn Nichol, 783 Victoria St., London, ON N5Y 4C9; 519-434-2476; briarhill33@yahoo.ca.

Mitchell, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Catherine Calkin, 3403 Perth Rd. 130, R. R. 2 St. Pauls, ON N0K 1V0; 519-393-6395; calkin@quadro.net.

Port Dover, Knox and Hagersville, St. Andrew's

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Notices are \$40 for one-time; \$25 for four insertions or more. Deadline to have your notice added is six weeks prior to month; so, for February 2009 the deadline will be December 15th, 2008.

(two-point charge); Interim Moderator Rev. Kathy Morden, Knox Presbyterian Church, 2058 Main St. N., Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0; 519-587-2565; knoxchal@bellnet.ca.

Simcoe, St. Paul's; Rev. Dr. Stan Cox, Interim Moderator c/o St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 85 Lot St., Simcoe, ON N3Y 1S4; 519-426-1845; sppc@kwic.com; www.stpaulssimcoe.com.

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Contact: Interim Moderator Rev. Mike Maroney, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 60 Fifth St. Chatham, ON N7M 4V7 519-352-2313 [maroney@firstchatham.org](mailto:maroney@firstchatham.org)

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# VACANCIES

Thornbury, St. Paul's; Rev. Ted Creen, 865 2nd Ave. West, Owen Sound, ON N4K 4M6; 519-376-7886; ted.creen@standrewsowensound.org.

Tiverton, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Susan Samuel, 345 Durham St., Kincardine, ON N2Z 1Y6; 519-396-2311; ssamuel@bmts.com.

Wallaceburg, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Mike Maroney, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 60 Fifth St., Chatham, ON N7M 4V7; 519-352-2313; maroney@firstchatham.org.

## SYNOD OF MANITOBA AND NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO

Brandon, Man., First; Interim Moderator Rev. Paul Sakasov, 338 11th St. E., Brandon, MB R7A 5W7; 204-727-2385; paul@pcbrandon.com.

Carberry, Man., Knox-Zion; Interim Moderator Rev. Jean Bryden, 808 9th St. NW, Portage la Prairie, MB R1N 3L3; 204-857-4815; jlbryden@mts.net.

Flin Flon, Man., St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Peter Bush, 197 Browning Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3K 0L1; 204-837-5706; peterwwpres@mts.net.

Selkirk, Man., Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. James Ko, 309 Strathnayer Ave., Selkirk, MB R1A 0H5; 204-785-9834; pastorjames68@hotmail.com

Thompson, Man., St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Peter Bush, 197 Browning Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3K 0L1; 204-837-5706; peterwwpres@mts.net.

## SYNOD OF SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatoon, St. Andrew's; seeking Minister to be part of a team ministry; Rev. Sandy Scott, Interim Moderator, 60 12th St. East, Prince Albert, SK S6V 1B2; 306-764-4771; sandy.scott@sasktel.net; www.standrews-saskatoon.net.

## SYNOD OF ALBERTA AND THE NORTHWEST

Calgary, Alta., Trinity; Interim Moderator Rev. David Vincent, 56 Scenic Rd. NW, Calgary, AB T3L 1B9; 403-547-7700; dave.barbvincent@shaw.ca.

Edmonton, Alta., Callingwood Road; Interim Moderator Rev. Bob Calder, 6607 31st Ave., Edmonton, AB T6K 4B3; 780-462-2446; crpc2007@gmail.com.

## SYNOD OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

North Vancouver, St. Andrew's and St. Stephen's; Rev. Dr. Brian J. Fraser, Interim Moderator,

1402-1327 East Keith Rd., North Vancouver, BC V7J 3T5; fraser@growingchurches.org.

Slocan Valley, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Gavin Robertson, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 1139 Pine Ave., Trail, BC V1R 4R2; 250-364-0335; firstpc@telus.net.

Vancouver, Kerrisdale; Co-Interim Moderators Revs. Joyce and Glen Davis, 6040 Iona Dr., Vancouver, BC V6T 2E8; 604-822-9807; gdavis@vst.edu.

Victoria, St. Andrew's; Full-time assistant minister, three-year call; Convener Search Committee Colina Titus, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 680 Courtenay St., Victoria, BC V8W 1C1; 250-384-5734; colina.titus@gmail.com.

## Obituaries

**BROWN**, Lloyd, aged 87 and a long-time member and elder of First Presbyterian, Chatham, Ont.

**CARMICHAEL**, Kenneth Duncan Hudspith, born in Verdun, Que. June 24, 1910, and died in Pointe-Claire, Que. on March 11, 2008. He was the dearly beloved husband of the late Anne Currie Macdonald Carmichael; cherished father of Moira Anne Hayes (Rev. Stephen A.) of Quebec City, and Kenneth Macdonald Carmichael (Lynn) of Ottawa, Ont.; dearly loved grandfather of Catherine Hayes Jackson (Rod) and Jonathan Hayes (Jane), and proud great-grandfather of Charlotte Hayes.

A life-long member of the Presbyterian Church, he was ordained an elder in First Presbyterian, Verdun, in 1936 and served as such in Moosejaw, Sask., Vernon and Nelson, B.C., St. Giles, Ottawa, and St. Columba-by-the-Lake, Pointe-Claire. The service of witness to the resurrection and thanksgiving for his life was conducted by Rev. Ian D. Fraser, minister of St. Columba-by-the-Lake.

**MACPHERSON**, Flora. A service of celebration was held in remembrance at St. Andrew's Presbyterian, Cardigan, P.E.I., on April 8, 2008. She would be remembered by several women who were

students at the Presbyterian Missionary and Deaconess Training School in Toronto during the 1950s and 1960s. There were two residences: one on St. George Street and the other on Prince Arthur Street.

Flora was employed as housekeeper. Because of the family-style nature of the houses, there was a considerable amount of mingling of students and staff in hallways, stairways, dining hall and so forth, and Flora became well-known to the residents. She referred to the students as "the girls." She was by nature fun-loving, supportive and hard-working. Flora eventually moved to a new job in the WMS offices where she had bookkeeping responsibilities and other office work in connection with the *Glad Tidings*.

Following her retirement, she returned to her home province, Prince Edward Island, where her sister, Catherine Smith (Kay) resides. In Flora's very late years and because of diminishing health she moved to a full-time care facility where she died just 10 days prior to her 92nd birthday. A tribute was prepared by her cousin Roberta (Shaw) Pocklington and was read at the service by another cousin, Adele Webster. In it, Flora was described as a person with deep faith who lived it fully; who was kind and gentle, blessed with a great sense of humour and a contagious laugh. Although Flora was a quiet person, she is one who will be well-remembered by her family and friends.

**SAMS**, Major, Rev. Peter Lyle, C.D. B.A., died on May 12, 2008, at Almonte, Ont. He graduated from Knox College and was ordained in 1953 in Timmins, Ont. Assistant to Dr. Ian Burnett at St. Andrew's, Ottawa, Ont. Asked by Col. F. Goforth to be a chaplain, Lyle served in Shilo, Egypt, Kingston, Petawawa, Valcartier, Chatham, N.B. and London, Ont. Retiring from the military in 1979, Lyle was then called to St. Andrew's, Quebec City, where he ministered for over 11 years.

He is greatly missed by his wife Margaret and his family: Findlay, Andrew, May, Katharine, Matthew



and four grandchildren. A memorial service was held at Almonte Presbyterian, conducted by Col. David Kettle, Rev. Dr. Stephen Hayes and Rev. James Ferrier.

**SMITH, Rev. Howard Donald**, of Morrisburg, Ont., aged 84, died peacefully, surrounded by his loving family, following a courageous battle with cancer on May 28, 2008, at the Winchester District Memorial Hospital, Winchester, Ont.

Howard was born and raised in Toronto. He served in the Air Force from 1943-45. He entered teachers' college and after graduation taught school in Port Dover, Ont., and Toronto from 1946-50. He then changed career paths as he felt the call of God to the ministry. He studied at Toronto Bible College, the University of Waterloo and Knox College and was ordained to the ministry in the Presbyterian Church on May 28, 1958. He ministered in congregations in Jarvis, Ont., Burlington, Ont., Ormstown, Que., Norval, Ont., Winchester, Ont. and Timmins, Ont. Howard passed away on the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the ministry.

Howard is survived by his wife Isabel of 51 years and children Stephen of Barrie, Ont., Paul (Susan) of Winchester, Ont., Susan (Neil) Kittle of Winchester and Mark of Vancouver, B.C., as well as five cherished granddaughters: Melissa, Megan, Dana, Leah Ann and Julia. He was predeceased by his son Peter in 1974.

Howard was a man who walked the talk when it came to living the Christian life. He was a pastor who lived what he preached and his life was fully dedicated to the Lord. He touched many lives for the Lord and will long be remembered for his humble and gentle spirit, his warm and tender heart and his dedication to God, his family and the people he served.

**WALTON, LOIS**, faithful member and dedicated elder of Knox Presbyterian Church, Dundas, Ont. died on Saturday, May 17, 2008. A kind, caring lady. ■

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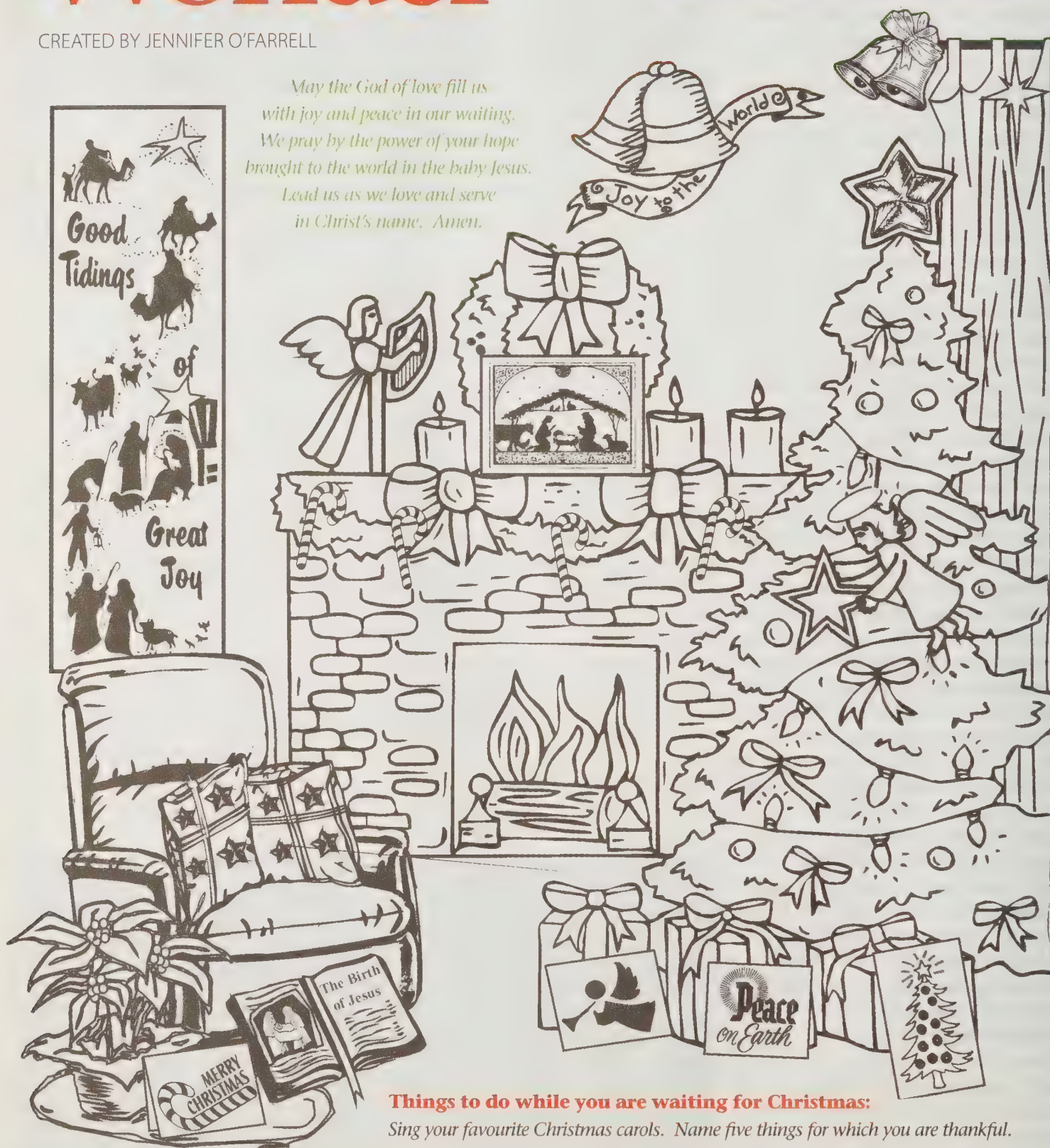
# Called to Wonder

CREATED BY JENNIFER O'FARRELL

## FIND AND COLOUR

Look and find Christmas: 14 stars, 4 bells, 3 angels, 12 bows, 5 candy canes, 2 Joy, 2 trees. Can you find candles? ... baby Jesus? ... camels? Keep on colouring and soon Christmas will be here.

*May the God of love fill us  
with joy and peace in our waiting.  
We pray by the power of your hope  
brought to the world in the baby Jesus.  
Lead us as we love and serve  
in Christ's name. Amen.*



### Things to do while you are waiting for Christmas:

Sing your favourite Christmas carols. Name five things for which you are thankful.  
Read the gospel birth stories aloud. Give praise to God for this joyous season.



## FOR THE JOURNEY

*For the Journey, continued from page 50*

wool mackinaw, jammed my cowboy hat on my head and rushed out the door. I was on my way to house church at Canim Lake.

Late that night found me on the road going the other direction. What with the snow, ice, and moose on the road, the trip was slow, which compelled me to take a couple of

and their following, and the Temple cult and their following. People were buying and selling and partying and eating and over-consuming. And other camps of people were impoverished and oppressed and their lives were extremely consumed with the busy struggle just to survive. Others, a much smaller group, were hiding

**{** The birth of Jesus is the one right ingredient for making a good Christmas. Throw in a little worship to kick it up a notch, and as far as I am concerned you have made a perfect Christmas!

hours to do some thinking. Christmas was on my mind. It's such a busy season and I was muttering to myself about all the goings-on I had to get going-on. That's when I realized that for me, a good Christmas is like pea soup. For me, a good Christmas is one where all the usual rich and complex stuff is left out and the one right ingredient is used. As far as I am concerned, you can leave out all the wonderful presents and gourmet meals and lavish parties and family gatherings and bustling stores and Christmas jingles and (dare I say it) church socials and concerts. For me, Christmas usually surprises me each year on Christmas Eve as I read the Christmas story about the birth of Jesus. The birth of Jesus is the one right ingredient for making a good Christmas. Throw in a little worship to kick it up a notch, and as far as I am concerned you have made a perfect Christmas!

My pea soup philosophy about Christmas was heavy on my mind when it suddenly struck me as I drove, that the original Christmas story is like good pea soup too. Biblical and historical studies reveal that the first Christmas happened in the midst of a world and society that was filled with many ingredients. There were the complexities of the extravagant goings-on of Herod the Great and his following, the Roman occupying forces

out in the desert with hectic resolve to ignore the whole damned busy thing. And into the midst of all the business of lavish consumption and the struggle to eke out an existence and the hectic resolve to maintain a desert spiritual superiority, one single, simple thing happened: A very young woman and her husband, homeless in a strange village, birthed a son in a delivery room with a sheep dung floor and a feeding trough nursery. That one single simple thing was the sole ingredient that made the first Christmas. Hallelujah!

It strikes me that Christmas is, and always has been, about paradoxical juxtapositions. Paradoxical juxtapositions serve to amplify. It's like two versions of pea soup placed side by side, with one version's simple succulent superiority amplified by the other version's complex, corpulent coarseness. Maybe it's a good thing that Christmas happens each year in the midst of all the busy consumptive rush, on just about every level, much of it smacking of religiosity. Suddenly placed right beside all of this, a wee babe is born in waxy nakedness and God says: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" (Mark 9:7) ■

*Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C., house church ministry.*



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LINDSAY, ST. MATTHEW'S, INGLESIDE, ONT.

# A Good Christmas is like Pea Soup

It's all about the right ingredient. BY DAVID WEBBER

“**H**ow come you're eating two bowls?” Linda scowled at me over the top of her half-reading glasses. “You don't usually eat even one full bowl of my pea soup.”

“Cause you made it different,” I burped and finished my second bowl. “What did you put in it this time? It's delicious!”

“Well, usually I use yellow peas and

add all kinds of stuff like onions, carrots, meat and stock from a ham bone, and several other secret ingredients known only to pea soup sorcerers like me,” Linda said. “This time all I used was dried green peas and a few red pepper flakes to kick it up a notch.” (Linda likes to watch *Emeril Live* on TV).

“That's all, huh?” I slid back my chair to make for thirds. “It tastes just like what Grandma used to make.”

Linda sighed. The Grandma comparison she has learned to live with, but she has never liked it much. “Go figure!” she said. “I put all that rich and wonderful stuff in my usual pea soup and you don't like it. I use just one plain ingredient and you love it.”

“Yeah, but it's the one right ingredient,” I said. I slurped down the last of my third bowl of soup, grabbed my

continued on page 49



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